



Lair's Legislative Log...



REPRESENTATIVE MIKE LAIR—DISTRICT 7

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As with many large entities, the watchwords this week in the General Assembly was hurry up and wait. Our committee schedules changed almost daily to accommodate the legislation coming across from the Senate. I was able to attend several committee meetings and catch up on topics other than my own areas of direct accountability. The down time between official responsibilities provided some much-appreciated desk time to catch up on other undertakings.

We have been deluged with *experts* offering to explain Senate Bill 8, the economic development bill. Several senators have offered workshop sessions and conference calls aimed at garnering House support for the package. I availed myself of every opportunity to listen to their explanations and the differences between the Senate and House versions of the bill are seemingly achievable, but at this point no compromise has been reached. There are still too many questions as to the real benefits generated by the massive tax credits being offered.

There have been several instances, as of late, of a rush to throw money at job creation without meaningful research. A prime example is the Chinese based Mamtek Corporation's plan to build a huge artificial sweetener plant in Moberly. There was a promise of a substantial foreign investment and a guarantee of \$39M industrial development bonds by the city of Moberly. In May, Missouri's Governor traveled to Moberly and touted the plan. Several

communities in Missouri and North Dakota had already turned down the proposal as being too risky. At present Mamtek has shut down their operation and Missouri's Attorney General has begun an investigation into possible civil or criminal charges. The real travesty here is that a mid Missouri town of 14,000 people may be responsible to pay back \$39M in bonds. We have seen several examples of the same set of circumstances on a national level with American tax dollars being lost to hasty, ill-advised decisions. To paraphrase the Hippocratic Oath, first of all, you must do no harm.

When I arrived in the House Chamber on Tuesday of last week, I looked at my seat and saw a sweet little lady sitting in my chair. As I became aware of my surroundings, I realized there were many unfamiliar faces around the House floor. It was the yearly meeting of the Silver-Haired Legislature, which is a body of formally elected citizens, 60 years old and older. This body promotes conscientious legislative advocacy for Missouri's older adults. The delegates are elected each May from local Area Agencies on Aging nutrition or senior centers and meet for a three-day session each fall to advance bills and resolutions that affect all Missouri citizens. Since their establishment in 1972, many of their priority bills have gone on to pass the General Assembly. Don Brockmeier of Carrollton was a representative of our 7th District area. Don stopped by the office later in the day

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to discuss proposed legislation that he had been working on. I was pleased to see so many citizens experiencing the legislative process. It is a learning process - to say the least. You can stop by my website www.RepMikeLair.com to see Don and me on the House floor as well as other 7th District news.

Education issues were “front and center” this week. I attended the House Education Committee meeting on the proposed fix of the infamous Facebook bill limiting electronic communication between teachers and students. The committee heard positive testimony from the teacher’s unions, the school board association, and several other interested parties, notably absent was the ACLU, which had filed suit against the bill. The bill’s new language leaves school employee/student communications up to local school boards where it always has been. The only thing that was missing was everyone holding hands in a big circle and singing kumbaya.

A significant piece of education news this week was the reclassification of the Kansas City Missouri School District to unaccredited status. After several years of optimistically waiting for progress on educational goals and the recent resignation of the Kansas City School District superintendent, I feel that the State Board of Education had little choice in the matter. There are several substantial ramifications of this decision. The foremost of which is the state law that allows any student enrolled in an unaccredited school district to transfer to an accredited district in the same or adjoining county with the unaccredited school paying tuition and transportation costs. The State

Supreme Court upheld the law in *Turner, et al. v. School District of Clayton*, but the law is in limbo while the St. Louis County Circuit Court takes up the matter this coming January. It would be easy to demonize all of the KCSD, but from personal contacts, I know that is not the case. There are good teachers, administrators, and staff in the system and they are struggling to escape from years of subpar leadership and corruption. The bottom line, as always, in this whole morass is the students that are left without a suitable education.

I want to congratulate the school district and the citizens of Carrollton for another Carrollton Band Day. The entire community comes together and offers a quality experience for young musicians and their supporting adults. I am proud of the efforts of this 7th District city.

Thank you for the privilege of representing the citizens of the 7th District. As always, Gregg and I are at your service at (573) 751-2917, or mike.lair@house.mo.gov or State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Avenue, Room 400, Jefferson City, MO 65101. My website is www.RepMikeLair.com

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