



Lair's Legislative Log...



REPRESENTATIVE MIKE LAIR—DISTRICT 7

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The skeins of geese headed south and the first sustained sting of cold temperatures and rain have reinforced the calendar's harbinger of winter's arrival. We are one month away from the opening gathering of the second session of the Ninety-Sixth General Assembly. I am reminded of the restarting each school year; I have similar feelings of anticipation and apprehension. The anticipation is stronger and reflects my natural positive disposition. The apprehension is focused on the budget process and the stark reality of too many needs chasing too few tax dollars.

The redistricting hammer dropped last Wednesday afternoon. The 2010 Census showed that Missouri's population had shifted and grown by seven percent. According to the "one-man-one-vote" precept, all districts, both federal and state, must reflect equal representation.

You will remember that during the last legislative session, we redistricted the state's congressional seats over the Governor's veto. A six member judicial panel just released the new House and Senate maps for the 97th Missouri General Assembly. There was a whirlwind of activity following that announcement. So much so, that the Office of Administration's website, detailing the maps, crashed. Initially, there was much *crying and gnashing of teeth*, the GOP, the state Democrats, the Black Caucus, St. Louis, Kansas City, and many rural House members

cried foul. However, as the details came to fore, it seems that like so many things done in state government, if everyone is a bit upset with you... you probably did a fairly decent job. There were fifty-five incumbent House members that were drawn into districts together, some in twos, and some in threes. Twenty-three were Democrats and thirty-two were Republicans. These members must decide to move, run against another incumbent, seek another office, or give up public service. At least five have already announced plans to seek another office. The media has made much of the court's seeming disregard for established incumbents, but my feeling is that no one is guaranteed a seat in the legislature and the redistricting process needs to reflect the democratic principals that we were founded on, not political expediency.

Now the 7th District reality: As of January 1, 2013, the 7th District will consist of Livingston, Grundy, and about eighty-five percent of Linn Counties. I will be losing Carroll County to the new 39th District, Caldwell, and Clinton Counties to the new 8th District. I am saddened to lose the relationships that have been forged over four years in these counties. I will be honest; I was incensed when I first heard the news. This was my first venture into public service and the friends I made were astonishing. However, you must play the cards you are dealt. I am still your representative for over a year and pledge to continue looking out for

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your interests in Jefferson City. The 2013 district maps for the House and Senate can be accessed on my website www.RepMikeLair.com.

The idea of creating a toll road out of I-70 has resurfaced with a renewed vigor. Something has to be done; even the roadway itself has been all but destroyed by the volume of traffic that it carries. Toll roads are used around the nation for the expensive proposition of infrastructure reconstruction and/or repair. Three lanes in each direction or a dedicated truck lane are the proposals most often put forward. The plans have a price tag of \$1.5 to \$4 billion. The funding streams that have been advanced are privatizing it to construct, maintain, and take tolls for a fifty-year window, double our gasoline tax, or a statewide sales tax dedicated to I-70. I have traveled extensively back East where toll roads are everywhere and I believe the “user tax” idea is no different from a fee to use a state park. The special interest groups will flock to both sides of this issue, but we must face it head on and do what is best for our citizens in a timely manner. I look forward to the debate. If you have an opinion on this issue, please contact me with your feelings and rational.

It is interesting to watch the national media react to the field of G.O.P. contenders for the presidential nomination. They shift their focus with the relative position of each to the other candidates. As a challenger breaks from the pack and into the lead, they are immediately hammered with new allegations of wrongdoing of some sort. I am not saying that the charges are false, but it reminds me of that

child’s game with a big wooden mallet...as a small furry animal pops out of a hole, the object is to hit it on the head as fast as you can and then go on to the next one that pops up. And, just think, we are going to be subjected to this for the next eleven months.

I want to thank many of you for your correspondence on last week’s discussion on the “occupy” groups and the definition of the word *opportunity*. I must confess that it came directly from one of my American Government class lectures. Teaching government and history was a great preparation for this job.

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

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