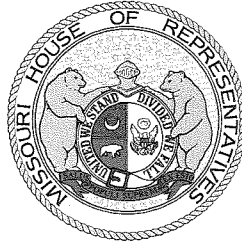


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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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February 17, 2009

Ms. Suzy Makalous
Director
Lifelong Learning
OneKC Wired
920 Main Street
Suite 640
Kansas City, MO 64105

Dear Ms. Makalous:

I wanted to let you know how much I appreciated your legislative briefing at the Capitol in January on the LiLA program. As a school teacher and a promoter of individualized learning programs, I think LiLA accounts have the potential to lead workers to better paying careers. We hear so much about jobs with regards to the economic conditions present today, but often the pathways to better jobs are left unmarked. I hope that employers will see the benefit of these types of learning accounts and how it can generate a more productive workforce. I took the liberty of sharing the LiLA program with my constituents in my weekly Capitol report and hope to see a similar initiative in the St. Louis region. I am enclosing a copy for your records.

Thanks again for the breakfast and the opportunity to learn more about your program.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cole McNary".

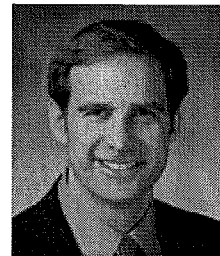
Cole McNary
State Representative
District 86

CCM/lpr
Enc.



CAPITOL REPORT

State Representative Cole McNary
District 86 • Chesterfield



February 5, 2009

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Missouri Matters

Last week, Governor Nixon delivered his first State of the State address to members of the 95th General Assembly. Standing on the dais, Governor Nixon talked a lot about jobs. With 219,000 Missourians out of work, this number represents the highest unemployment figure in 25 years. He said, "We believe in the value of a hard day's work. But too many Missourians are unemployed – or fear they may soon become unemployed. We must create new jobs and we must do it now."

Creating the job is only half the battle. And given the downcast state of our current economy, I don't want to minimize the importance of jobs and lessen the impact that a "hard day's work" can have on a person's economic and financial health. However, I feel the emphasis on "jobs" misses the mark. A very wise man once told me that he would give me a job if I ever needed one. Wow, how generous, I thought, but it sounded too good to be true – and it was. Anyone can offer you a job. There is always plenty of work to be done. Our focus rather should be on what the job pays.

Governor Nixon is right, we need to create jobs. But what will help Missourians in the long run is the creation of good, well-paying jobs; the kinds of jobs that can support families and healthy lifestyles and serve as a conduit to our ever-present pursuit of happiness. And where are these high quality jobs created? The answer has been and always will be the private sector.

The Quality Jobs Act was passed during Governor Blunt's administration. This piece of legislation created incentives for business owners to generate thousands of high paying jobs that offered health care. Governor Nixon said, "We must not only continue this program, we must expand it."

I am pleased at this commitment, however my concerns with the Governor's plan for Missouri lies with the budget shortfall of \$542 million that faces the state. Because of the commitment to fiscal responsibility held by the House of Representatives, Governor Nixon will only have to cut \$261 million by June 30 to balance the budget, not the entire \$542 million. The \$281 million state savings account was accumulated over the last four years by choosing not to spend every dollar of collected revenue. My concern is that our Governor's ideas for the betterment of Missouri may lead to the depletion of these reserves in less than a year's time. My goal as your legislator is to preserve fiscal responsibility, work towards smaller, more efficient government and promote overall tax reform.



Skills, Smarts and Salaries

Knowledge, expertise, and skill all contribute to better pay over the long run. This past week the Governor mentioned in his address that "to seize the economy of the future, we must ensure that our workers have the skills and training for the jobs of tomorrow." That's a pretty straightforward statement. As technology evolves and economies change, so must our workforce. One of the safest ways to ensure job security is to stay mentally sharp.

At the Capitol this week I learned about Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs). An idea developed by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), LiLAs are employer-matched, employee-owned individual educational accounts used to finance workers' education and training. Designed much like a 401(k), the funds accumulated in LiLA accounts help workers expand their skill sets, increase productivity, build loyalty and create new opportunities.

LiLA contributions can also be matched by third parties, including philanthropic, federal, state, and local government resources. Since 2001, LiLAs have been launched in several small-scale initiatives across the country. Currently rolled out as a pilot program in Kansas City, LiLA has potential to propel Missouri workers towards new income possibilities. I encourage you to look into this great educational savings program at www.MyLilaNow.com.

Committees and Legislative Work

My committee assignments for this session are as follows: Elementary and Secondary Education, Ethics, Financial Institutions, Ways and Means and Special Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Transportation Funding.

At the first Infrastructure and Transportation hearing, the committee discussed House Bill 215, which would allow port authority boards to establish port improvement districts that will help facilitate environmental cleanup; and House Bills 271 and 359 which pertain to design/build highway project contracts. With the potential federal funding from the economic stimulus package, Missouri needs to be prepared with legislation that will allow us to respond productively.

District Tip of the Week

This week representatives from the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives were in the Capitol promoting energy policies. With regards to cell phone chargers, we learned that only 5% of power drawn by cell phone chargers is actually used to charge the phone, the other 95% is wasted when you leave it plugged in the wall. So remember to unplug when not in use or put all chargers on a power strip and use the switch to turn it on and off. Otherwise it's just a waste of money and resources.

Thanks for reading. Please feel free to forward this report to any interested parties. And of course, if you prefer to not receive these postings then just hit reply and ask to be removed.

We are here at your service and look forward to a productive legislative session.

Best regards,

Cole

Cole McNary