



*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

Working Together to Build a Better Missouri

Op-Ed Piece

Submitted by: Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood

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A great deal has been said about how divided we are as a nation, some saying there are two Americas, others that deep divisions will prevent us from moving forward together. Missouri's history has witnessed deep divisions. As a border state during the Civil War, violence and bloodshed was great as brothers took up arms against each other.

Thankfully, today the things separating us are far less extreme. It would do us all well to recall Abraham Lincoln's message about creating divisions: a "House divided against itself cannot stand." Moreover, the seal of our great state echoes this theme: "United We Stand - Divided We Fall."

The Missouri Senate must be united in the desire to make sure Missourians have jobs and an opportunity to succeed; that our children have good schools and great educations; that we have access to quality healthcare; that our roads are safe and our transportation system strong; that our tax system is fair and generates the money necessary to fund critical functions simply and without great burden; and that waste, fraud and abuse in Medicaid is eliminated.

Missourians have witnessed massive change in Jefferson City. Since 1992 we have seen a transition from a Democrat controlled state government, to that of a Republican controlled one. This is the first time in 84 years that Republicans have been in this position, and only the fourth time in Missouri history.

With all this change, there is an opportunity to shape how the Senate will work to better our state. I applaud Senate Minority Leader Maida Coleman for her leadership and interest in restoring civility to the Senate.

The Senate is committed to putting the people of Missouri before politics.

The voters on November 2nd sent a clear message: "We want change. We want action. We want results. We want an end to the gridlock between the governor and the General Assembly."

Your message has been heard.

We will pass tort reform and see it signed into law this year. Someone who is hurt should have their day in court, while the people sued should have a fair opportunity to defend themselves. Doing so will mean Missourians no longer pay more for less medical care.

Workers compensation reform is also likely to have early action. When an employee's injury is caused by work, he or she should be protected and compensated for their loss, but when work is not the cause of the injury, the employer should be protected from such claims and the higher insurance premiums they cause. When this system is in balance, workers and employers win.

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An electronic version can be found at:

www.senate.state.mo.us/05info/members/mem15.htm (Current News Releases Link)

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The school funding formula that distributes state tax dollars to elementary and secondary schools is broken. The Senate will lead the way on this complicated issue that affects the education our children receive; the cost paid by you, the taxpayer; and the strength of our state's economy. We must find the right balance so all of our children, no matter their public school district, have an equal opportunity for a great education.

While our state's economy is improving, there are still many budget challenges. The Senate will work with the Blunt Administration in crafting a balanced budget that protects taxpayers while providing adequate funding for critical functions of government.

My goal for the Missouri Senate, working together with the House and governor, is to give every Missourian the opportunity to pursue their dreams, improve their lives and make our state the best place in America to live, work and raise a family.

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