



**STATE REPRESENTATIVE
RICK BRATTIN
124TH DISTRICT**



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Majority Floor Whip
Freshman Class President

This week in the Missouri House we passed our version of the state budget. Coming in at over \$23 billion dollars it's quite obvious our budget will have a huge impact for the state of Missouri. While everyone will not be happy and we couldn't do everything some would have liked, it was a budget that does the most we can while still protecting our taxpayers.

At a time when our state and the nation are struggling economically, making ends meet can be difficult. However we were still able to provide key services despite rolling back funding across the board. Most importantly, I believe we were able to accomplish this without any tax increases! In fact, we actually set aside \$49 million just to ensure our state would have a positive balance at the end of the next fiscal year.

The biggest highlight of the budget for the next fiscal year is the fact that we were able to keep funding for the education foundation formula whole. This ensures that despite a tough economic environment we are able to make investments in our future.

Other highlights include combining several programs together and setting aside \$40 million for job retraining, retention, and development. This is an important part of helping a struggling workforce emerge from this recession. In addition, we scratched together roughly \$12 million dollars for Preparing to Care. This program works through higher education institutions and trains young people in the growing field of healthcare services, which often offer good paying jobs.

Another area where we were able to make some key decisions was actually in reduction and spending. For instance, we chose to cut funding for the state legislature more than any other statewide office to show our commitment to lead by example. We also placed a cap on the size of salaries in the public sector. This move was made after it was found the Governor has 6 positions alone in his office making over \$100,000.

We also improved transparency and protected the integrity of other state department budgets. One way we did this was to make sure flights taken by the Governor weren't unfairly billed to other state agencies – making the travel more transparent and protecting departments' core budgets.

Finally, we set the precedent that the budgeting process will continue year round. We have already issued notice to state departments and agencies that containing costs is a key priority and it should be done regardless of the economic conditions because improved efficiency needs to be our

constant goal.



This week we were kept busy with guests. I hosted District 124th day and visitors came to meet and tour the Capitol. We discussed upcoming legislation and I enjoyed hearing their views on the various bills.

In addition, I had the opportunity to visit with an OATS group that came to visit with for the day. Everyone enjoyed themselves and I am looking forward to more visits from constituents.



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