

# House Minority Caucus

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**Paul LeVota, Minority Leader**  
**J.C. Kuessner, Asst. Minority Leader**  
**Connie Johnson, Minority Whip**  
**Ed Wildberger, Caucus Chair**  
**Sara Lampe, Caucus Secretary**  
**Gina Walsh, Caucus Vice Chair**



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## **House Democrats to champion change in 2008 session**

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The 2008 legislative session began Wednesday with House Democrats renewing efforts to restore health care services to thousands of Missourians, improve the quality of and access to public education and reform state government, among other goals in their 2008 Moving Missouri Forward legislative agenda.

“The time for change is now,” said House Minority Leader Paul LeVota, D-Independence. “In recent years the General Assembly has embraced the wrong priorities, the wrong principles and the wrong ideas. As a result, we have missed opportunities to build a stronger Missouri. It doesn’t have to be this way. House Democrats are committed to changing the priorities of state government to improve the lives of all Missourians.”

A top goal for House Democrats remains reversing the unnecessary cuts championed three years ago by Gov. Matt Blunt that resulted 180,000 fewer Missourians having access to health care. Because of the cuts, a parent with two children who earns more than \$292 a month – just \$3,504 a year – doesn’t qualify for coverage.

“The cuts of 2005 directly caused the number of uninsured Missourians to jump by three times the national rate,” said Assistant House Minority Leader J.C. Kuessner, D-Eminence. “Missouri not only can afford to reverse the cuts; it can’t afford not to.”

On education, House Democrats propose increasing the operating budgets of Missouri’s public colleges and universities by a minimum \$50.4 million for the 2009 fiscal year to restore higher education funding to FY 2002 levels, the record year for higher education appropriations. The governor has proposed a \$40 million increase.

Restoring accountability and integrity to state government remains another priority. In particular, House Democrats will again oppose efforts to repeal Missouri’s voter-imposed campaign finance limits. The legislature unwisely repealed the limits in 2006, but the Missouri Supreme Court reinstated them last year. Democrats will also seek to close loopholes in the campaign finance laws that also donors to circumvent the donation limits by laundering funds through political party committees.

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