

NEWS RELEASE

From the Office of
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124th District
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2008

Update on State Budget

Last week the House of Representatives approved a \$22.45 billion state operating budget for the 2009 fiscal year which begins July 1st. This budget is nearly a half-billion dollars under the \$22.94 billion Governor Blunt requested.

This is the largest budget in Missouri history, but it still falls short in certain areas. Health care continues to be a growing problem across the state. With 700,000 uninsured and the unknown about the Insure Missouri Plan, little was done to increase access to health care. The 180,000 Missourians cut off health care in 2005 were not restored. The Medicaid eligibility was lowered to 85 percent of the Federal Poverty Level meaning a single parent with two children who earns more than \$292 a month, \$3,504 a year, doesn't qualify for coverage and dental and vision coverage was not restored.

In K-12 Education, the \$121 million increase is the bare minimum required by state law and the budget shortchanged school districts on transportation cost. With fuel prices topping \$3 a gallon, the expense of transporting students is causing a severe strain on school budgets.

The looming transportation funding crises was not addressed in the budget. Starting next year, MoDOT will have to shift more of its revenue to pay off a massive debt. As a result, its construction budget will drop by more than half from \$1.23 billion in the current fiscal year (FY08) to \$569 million in FY2010. For nearly three and a half years leadership has known this day of financial reckoning was coming and have done nothing to prepare for it.

The 13 Appropriations Bills that make up the state budget now head to the Senate for further consideration. The constitutional deadline for sending the budget bills to the governor is May 9th.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you and to be your voice in Jefferson City. If you need assistance or information, please feel free to contact me. My contact information is: Representative Luke Scavuzzo, House Post Office, Jefferson City, MO 65101; my phone number is: 573-751-4072; my e-mail address is: luke.scavuzzo@house.mo.gov.

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