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# Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - Friday, August 5, 2016

AUGUST 06TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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### The Importance of Voting

This week many Missourians chose to exercise one of their most important rights by heading to the polls to vote in the August primary. Men and women from all over the state participated in the elections process to help determine who will represent them in the halls of government. By casting their votes, they were able to make their voices heard to help determine the path the state of Missouri will take heading into the future.

While approximately 1 million Missourians took the time to cast their votes, the 2016 primary also underscores the fact that many more Missourians continue to choose not to exercise their right to vote. Missouri typically sees voter turnout in the 20 to 25 percent range for primary elections and August 2 primary followed that pattern. The truth is that approximately three out of every four voters choose to disenfranchise themselves by not participating in the process. When considering that some primaries were decided by as few as 50 votes, it reinforces the fact that every vote counts and that Missourians need to become more engaged in the political process.

Missourians who did not participate now have the opportunity to research the candidates and their issues and prepare to make their voices heard in November. Missourians will have the ability to help determine the winners and losers and, ultimately, the kind of policies the state and nation will work toward in the coming years. Hopefully Missourians

will not take this fundamental right for granted.

## Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday

Summer will soon be winding down and families will turn their attention to sending their kids back to school. School starting up again soon means parents will need to buy new school supplies and clothes to get their children ready for the classroom. To help with this process, Missouri has a three-day back-to-school tax holiday that exempts everything from school supplies to computers from sales tax.

Approved by the legislature in 2003, the three-day period allows parents to buy school-related items such as clothing, school supplies and computers without having to pay the state sales tax of 4.225 percent. In some cases, local municipalities have also chosen to honor the holiday, which means parents in these areas will be able to forego local sales tax as well. For a complete list of the cities and counties that have chosen not to participate, please use the following link:

**<http://dor.mo.gov/business/sales/taxholiday/school/>**

**This** is a great way for Missourians to stretch their dollars by making the cost of going back to school a little more affordable. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of the holiday that begins Friday, Aug. 5 at 12:01 a.m. and runs through Sunday, Aug. 7. It's important to note that the school supply tax exemption has a limit of \$50 per purchase, while the clothing exemption has a \$100 limit and the personal computer tax exemption has a limit of \$1,500. For more information, please visit:

**<http://dor.mo.gov/business/sales/taxholiday/school/consumers.php>**

## Legislature Likely to Revisit Unemployment Reform Issue

It was during the 2015 session that the Missouri General Assembly approved legislation to reform the state's system of unemployment. The legislation was intended to bring financial stability to the system, which went insolvent after the 2008 economic downturn. Its primary provisions acted to link unemployment benefits to the rate of unemployment, and ensure the state keeps more money in the unemployment trust fund. It was a change House members supported in order to end Missouri's trend of borrowing money from the federal government to pay for unemployment benefits.

Shortly after the legislature acted, the governor vetoed the legislation to prevent it from becoming law. House members then quickly responded by overriding the governor's veto and sending the bill to the Senate to complete the override. However, Senate members did

not act during the regular session, but instead completed the veto override motion during the annual Veto Session in September. The bill then went into effect as law and Missouri reformed its system of unemployment as the legislature intended.

These reforms were recently struck down when the Missouri Supreme Court decided the veto override completed by the legislature was invalid. Specifically, the court decided the Senate violated the constitution by overriding the veto during the annual Veto Session, which the court said is reserved for bills vetoed only during the final week of the regular session or later. In the opinion of the court, because the bill was vetoed by the governor more than a week before session ended, the Senate needed to complete the override motion during the regular session rather than the Veto Session.

The decision drew immediate criticism from legislative leaders. House Speaker Todd Richardson said, “We are now in unprecedented and unsettling territory with the Supreme Court’s decision to overstep its authority and create new limits on the legislature’s veto override power. The truth is that our constitution provides both legislative bodies with the authority to determine the rules of their own proceedings, and our proceedings clearly complied with our own requirements and the language of the constitution. To see the court overreach in this way in order to invalidate a piece of legislation that received the support of supermajorities in both chambers should raise concerns for all Missourians who believe in fair and balanced branches of government.”

Senate leaders pledged to revisit the issue when the legislature convenes for the 2017 session in January. Members from both chambers have pointed out that the state will have a new governor when the legislature meets again, and many are hopeful the state will have a leader who will work with House and Senate members to fix the state’s system of unemployment so that it can remain solvent.

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