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Blunt Restores Year-Round Pell Grants in Govt. Funding Bill

MAY 02ND 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Blunt Restores Year-Round Pell Grants in Govt. Funding Bill

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (Mo.), chairman of the Senate appropriations subcommittee that funds the Department of Education, today announced that the omnibus appropriations bill restores eligibility for year-round Pell Grants. This measure would provide an estimated 20,000 students at Missouri colleges and universities who take classes year-round an additional \$1,650 per year, on average, to help pay for college.

“Restoring year-round Pell Grants is a bipartisan, common-sense approach to making college more affordable for hardworking students in Missouri and across the nation,” Blunt said. “By allowing full and part-time students to receive an additional Pell Grant during the year, often for a summer session, we’re helping them stay on track for graduation, enter or re-enter the workforce sooner, and graduate with less debt.”

Currently, many full-time students and some part-time students exhaust their full benefit after two semesters. Restoring year-round Pell will help an estimated one million students stay enrolled in classes throughout the year, which will lower their tuition costs and accelerate completion of their degree program.

Blunt, a former history teacher and president of Southwest Baptist University, has led efforts in Congress to restore year-round Pell Grants. As chairman of the Labor/HHS subcommittee, Blunt first secured this year-round Pell provision in the bipartisan, committee-passed FY 2017 appropriations bill, paving the way for its inclusion in the

omnibus bill.

Blunt also visited colleges and universities across Missouri where he met with educators, students, and faculty as a part of his Pell Grant Tour.

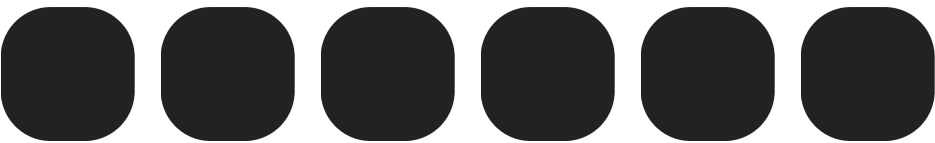
Blunt continued, “I’ve been incredibly encouraged by the support we’ve received in our effort to help more people get the education they need to get ahead. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this measure when it comes before the Senate.”

The omnibus appropriations bill, which funds the government for the remainder of the fiscal year, was introduced today and is expected to be considered by the Senate later this week.

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday,

April 28, 2017

MAY 01ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, April 28, 2017

Congressman Smith Capitol Report Fighting for What's Yours April 28, 2017

Our tax code is a mess, and that's putting it lightly. Multiple brackets. High rates. Special interest breaks everywhere. Rules and regulations that are too complicated to understand. It costs more and more each year just to do your taxes, let alone pay them.

All of this drags people down and leaves them buried in paperwork and compliance problems. Instead of bringing jobs to America, our tax code is pushing jobs overseas. Even worse, the agency charged with overseeing all of this—the IRS—has repeatedly violated the trust of the American taxpayer.

This week, President Trump laid out his plan to seriously overhaul our tax code and make the IRS as we know it today cease to exist. Like me, he knows that it is time to get Washington out of people's paychecks and savings and fix our broken tax code.

First, we must create a tax system that brings jobs to America. Hard-working Americans deserve a tax system that creates jobs here at home, not drives them overseas.

Second, we are going to make taxes simple! Since 2001, the U.S. tax code has been changed nearly 6,000 times. That's more than once a day. Right now, it costs Americans over four hundred and nine BILLION dollars to comply with our tax laws. It is ridiculous to have a tax code so complicated that people must PAY to find out how much they owe the federal government.

We are going to cut out loopholes that increase confusion and keep rates artificially high. This will make the tax code dramatically simpler and fairer while also taking less money from families and job creators. On top of this, we will make it easier and more rewarding for families to save, invest, and plan for the future. Bottom line, the government should be taking the least amount of money from people as possible.

Third, we are going to bust up the IRS. The IRS is an overgrown bureaucratic mess. I sent

President Trump a letter asking him to fire the untrustworthy IRS Commissioner, John Koskinen. Koskinen refuses to be held accountable. He has lied to Congress, destroyed evidence we requested and worst of all, has completely ignored customer service. Less than half of all taxpayers who call the IRS for help are able to reach a live person and the wait time if you can reach someone is over 30 minutes. It's unacceptable. We must give the IRS a single mission – taxpayer service. People who are employed by the IRS need to understand who they work for and that is you, the hard-working taxpayer.

I know taxes have been a major burden in your life, and we must change that. Missourians work too hard every day for taxes to keep them from getting ahead and providing for their families. I am fighting for a simpler, fairer and flatter tax code that will bring jobs back to America and keep more money in your pocket!

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Representative Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report -

Friday, April 21, 2017

APRIL 24TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Representative Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - Friday, April 21, 2017

State Rep. Tila Hubrecht Supports Charter School Compromise, Includes Full Funding for Missouri's Public Schools

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Missouri's public schools will receive full funding for the first time under a charter school bill supported by state Rep. Tila Hubrecht. Hubrecht had been opposed to charter school expansion but said a compromise put forward by House Speaker Todd Richardson included the funding and accountability measures that made the bill more palatable.

"I am a strong defender of our public school system and believe we have amazing schools providing a world class education to our young people. I don't want to do anything to jeopardize that, and I firmly believe the bill the House passed has protections in place to ensure our public schools will be able to continue to succeed," said Hubrecht, R-Dexter. "As part of the compromise on the bill, public schools will now receive record funding levels as our foundation formula will be fully funded for the first time. This is great news for our young people and for our educators who will have access to the resources they need to provide a quality education."

The language included in the charter school bill (HB 634) would limit charter school expansion only to areas where schools are failing. The bill is meant to provide additional options to students who would otherwise have nowhere else to turn to receive a quality education.

"Some have accused me of being dishonest on this issue because I supported the bill after being opposed to charter school expansion in the past. The truth is that Speaker Richardson listened to my concerns and worked with me and other members of our caucus make this bill one we all could live with," said Hubrecht. "This bill isn't perfect but it does strengthen our support for public schools, while also allowing for the doors of opportunity to be opened for young people who would otherwise be left behind."

Hubrecht noted that the legislation would increase the accountability and academic requirements for not only new charter schools, but existing ones as well. The bill would limit charter school expansion to districts that have a school building with an Annual

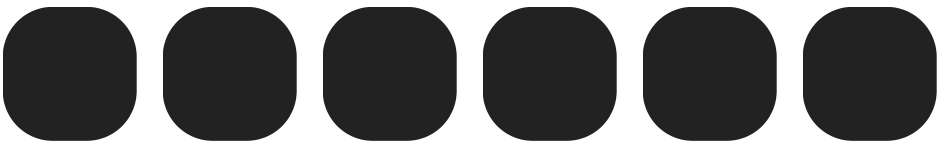
Performance Report (APR) score of 60 or lower in two of the last three years. If a charter underperforms in comparison to similar schools in their district for two of the past three years, they will be limited to a three-year charter renewal. The bill provides that charter schools will have a three year probationary period, and if a charter performs poorly during two of the three years, that charter school will be ineligible for renewal and will be forced to close.

The bill would also limit the public dollars sent to charter schools to more than 90 percent of the sending district’s tuition. Additionally, the bill is contingent on the school foundation formula being fully funded. If the K-12 formula is not fully funded, then no charter school changes go into effect.

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday,

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, April 21, 2017

"It was a pleasure to visit with Richland High School as well. Congratulations on being named a National Blue Ribbon School! This is a major academic achievement and I was thrilled to help them celebrate," commented Congressman Jason Smith

Thank you to everyone who made time to talk with me over the past few weeks. Whether it's a public listening post or visiting with farmers, families and small business owners in places like Dexter, Poplar Bluff and Sullivan, conversations like these help me better represent southeast and south central Missouri.

I was also able to visit several schools including Dexter High School, Jefferson High School in Festus, and Central High School in Park Hills. It is a tremendous honor to be able to nominate talented and brave young men and women to our prestigious United States military academies. During these school visits, I had the privilege of presenting several students at these schools with their hard-earned appointments to a military academy.

I also dropped by several public Listening Posts throughout our area, including stops in Rolla, Farmington, Jackson, Poplar Bluff and West Plains, and heard from people who were concerned about healthcare, government regulations, the EPA and the federal tax code. At my Listening Post in Jackson and during my visit to the American Legion and VFW Post #99 in Salem, I heard from several veterans who needed help with their Veteran's Benefits. Making sure the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) serves our veterans is one of my biggest priorities. Last year, I worked with the American Legion and VFW Post #99 to extend the VA clinic hours in Salem. If you or someone you know needs help from places like the VA - please reach out and let us know!

During a stop in Caruthersville I visited Trinity Industries. Their facility in Caruthersville provides hundreds of jobs and can build 12 barges a week! But like me, they're concerned about countries who cheat on trade and make it harder for American manufacturers to compete. SLP Lighting in Sullivan was another great opportunity for me to learn about how government burdens have been keeping our small businesses from reaching their potential. SLP Lighting is proud to be made in America, but like Trinity Industries, they are fighting an unfair trade system. The folks at Trinity Industries and SLP Lighting are why I wrote and passed the ENFORCE Act. This trade bill was signed into law and helps end unfair practices by allowing places like Trinity Industries to take real and meaningful

action when foreign countries violate trade agreements.

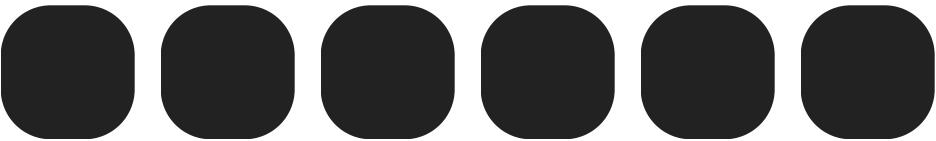
In New Madrid, I visited the Power Plant and talked to the folks there about the challenges they face as they work to provide power to Missourians. The New Madrid Power Plant was dealing with a major regulatory burden under the previous administration and are quickly seeing relief under President Trump - allowing them to continue their work to provide clean, affordable power to farmers, small businesses and families in Missouri.

It is an honor to serve the thirty counties which make up the 8th Congressional District in southeast and south central Missouri. The best part of my job is getting to spend time with the hard-working families, farmers and business owners who make our district the greatest place to live in the world. Over the past few weeks, I had the opportunity to visit over twenty counties in our area and meet with the people who provide power, work on manufacturing lines, serve our country, care for our veterans, farm our land, teach our students and bring jobs to our area.

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Congressman Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, April 14, 2017

APRIL 18TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, April 14, 2017

Congressman Smith Capitol Report American Made April 14, 2017

Across southeast and south central Missouri, I have met some of the hardest working people found anywhere in America. Whether they are farmers, manufacturers or small business owners, they all have one thing in common – they want to do their jobs free of government overreach and interference, and provide their products, services and goods to others in Missouri and around the world.

American made goods are the best and highest quality found anywhere in the world, but in order for our farmers and businesses to survive and grow, other countries and businesses they are competing against must follow the rules. For too long we have simply sat back and accepted allowing other countries to subsidize their businesses, illegally flood our borders with their products or use various measures to circumvent U.S. trade laws. It's time we finally say – *play by the rules or there will be consequences*.

Last week in the Oval Office, President Trump took major steps to stop countries from cheating on trade. He signed documents demanding that we fully collect all duties and tariffs imposed on foreign importers that cheat and second, that we conduct the first comprehensive review of all violations of trade rules that harm U.S. manufacturers. Trump's action builds on my legislative work of authoring and passing the ENFORCE Act in 2015 which helps end unfair practices by allowing companies in Missouri to take real and meaningful action when foreign companies violate trade agreements.

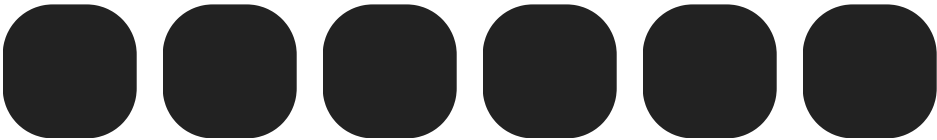
Missouri manufacturers work too hard to compete against an unfair system abroad and a tax and regulatory environment which punishes them here at home. In December of 2016, I met with and sent a [letter](#) to the incoming Trump administration asking them to eliminate 14 federal rules and regulations, many of which would impact Missouri manufacturers. In his first 85 days, President Trump has halted or repealed more than half of the regulations outlined in my letter. Two of the biggest regulatory wins for Missourians included stopping a regulation which would have tripled some residents' utility rates in Missouri and ending Obama's plan to try and regulate every pond, bucket of water or raindrop on a farmer's private land. Ending these regulations is a major victory and will keep money in the pockets of Missouri families, farmers and small businesses.

There is huge potential for Missouri farmers, small businesses and manufacturers to sell their American grown or made products around the world, but we must create an environment that is competitive and makes their efforts worthwhile. The ENFORCE Act along with having a President in the Oval Office who is willing to hold countries engaged in illegal trade practices accountable is a huge first step to putting American manufacturers, farmers and workers first, but more work remains to be done. We must enact policies and create an environment where those businesses can bring their products to market with greater ease and lower costs – that means reducing the highest tax burden in the industrialized world, repealing onerous regulations driving up the costs of everything from energy to transportation of goods, and rewarding investments made here in the United States to grow one’s business or farm, not punishing it. Along with the Trump Administration, I am committed to restoring confidence in the American economy and standing by American farmers, workers and employers.

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