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Providing a Pathway to Success for Missouri's Future

MAY 14TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Providing a Pathway to Success for Missouri's Future

In January of this year my office hosted the 2018 Southeast Missouri Education Forum at Three Rivers College in Poplar Bluff with over 40 K-12 schools represented by their Superintendents, Principals, and Board members. The theme of the forum was “are we teaching what our students need for the 21st century?”

Recently, the Missouri Senate gave final approval to legislation intended to attract high paying jobs to Missouri. Senate Bill 894/921, which I sponsored, incentivizes high school students to take computer science courses. Ensuring the passage of this career opportunity bill was one of my top priorities for the 2018 legislative session.

It requires new computer science standards to include coding and programming along with guidelines designed for K-12 schools. This will encourage more Missouri students to study computer science by allowing the course to count toward high school graduation. Polls indicate that 93% of Missouri parents want their children to be taught the computer science skills they need for the 21st Century job market. This knowledge is in high demand across our state and country. The bill also creates a certification program for computer science teachers as well as introduces an online program that showcases STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) careers and their impact on today's economy.

It has been reported that more than 11,000 unfilled computer science jobs are available in our state, with an average salary of \$82,000, which is nearly double the current average salary in Missouri. Computing occupations are the number one source of all new wages in

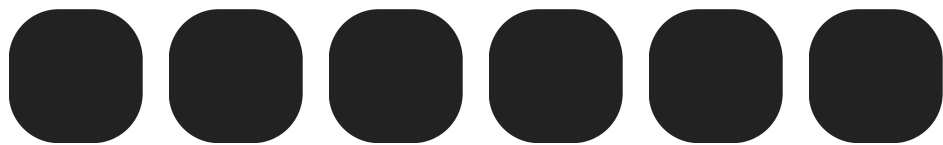
the United States. Jobs in STEM related fields, especially those focusing on computer technology, are the driving force of growth and innovation throughout Missouri. I am pleased to see this legislation receive approval from the General Assembly, not only for the opportunities it presents for today's students, but for all Missourians. Senate Bill 894, received final approval and is now headed to the governor's desk for his signature. The legislation will go into effect on Aug. 28, 2018.

I welcome you to visit your State Capitol and stop by our office in room 219, or call (573) 751-4843 with any questions, concerns or comments you may have. I am honored to serve the citizens of the 25th Senatorial District.

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - A Week for American Job Creators

MAY 07TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Smith Capitol Report
A Week for American Job Creators
May 4, 2018

The comeback of rural America, ignited in large part by a President who understands that we are more than just flyover country on the way to Hollywood, has been joined in recent months with new optimism from American small businesses. Whether it be a result of reducing the federal tax burden, slashing thousands of regulations which were tying up valuable business resources and employee time, or a change in the overall atmosphere from one which wants to punish American entrepreneurs to one which wants to reward them, small businesses across the U.S. are thriving. This week we pause to reflect on the importance of these small businesses and their contribution to our economy during American Small Business Week.

As the American economy comes roaring back, the importance of small businesses, defined as those with less than 500 employees, can't be overstated. Small businesses jobs account for half of all those in the U.S. and are rising – in fact two out of every three new jobs in this country come directly from a small business. These are the family owned and run operations where the owners sweat, equity and risk taking often keeps them awake each night.

I was fortunate this week to visit several thriving small businesses across southern Missouri to hear about their operations and what I can be working on to help them succeed. Mike Roberts, owner of Mansfield Building Supply in Wright County showed me his business and discussed the logistics of operating additional stores in Ava, Gainesville and Seymour. He talked to me about rising confidence from consumers and suppliers with President Trump in the White House; a marked difference from the last eight years where they didn't know which Washington regulation they would be socked with next.

It's simple, with a cut in taxes, massive regulatory relief, and an improving business climate, small businesses are once again investing, hiring and expanding. Unemployment is at 3.9%, a 17 year low and wages are up almost 3%, their highest year to year in 10 years. Most recently, the National Federation of Independent Business shared that optimism amongst small businesses was at some of the highest points in the last 45 years. They also reported that pay increases from small business owners to employees was at its highest level since the turn of the century, with many other owners planning new job

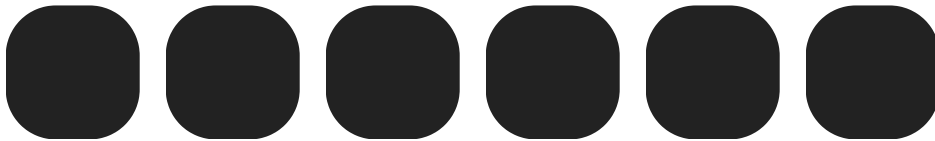
creation announcements.

When Washington over regulates, when Washington over taxes – it is the American small business owner who disproportionately carries that burden. With few employees, compliance costs cannot be distributed and hours and money which could be spent growing ones business are instead spent on filling out paperwork for a Washington bureaucrat. Something has gone off the tracks when business expansion plans have to be put on hold because it is more complex to complete your stack of 1099 forms or the latest reporting requirement from the IRS. That is where we were. But for the last 17 months, I have worked under the leadership of a President who wants to correct that wrong, who has slashed taxes, removed over 1,000 regulations and whose committing to doing more. Our work isn't done, but with unemployment down, wages up and businesses ready to invest and grow, we know we are on the right path.

LAST UPDATED ON MAY 07TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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U.S. Rep. Smith Announces Congressional Art

Competition Winner

MAY 03RD 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

U.S. Rep. Smith Announces Congressional Art Competition Winner

U.S. Rep. Smith Announces Congressional Art Competition Winner

Smith congratulates finalists and announces winner, Avery Coffman with “St. Jude Chapel Montauk, MO”

Cape Girardeau, Missouri - Congressman Jason Smith congratulated Congressional Art Competition finalists and announced the winner during a reception at the Southeast Missouri State University River Campus on Monday evening. Avery Coffman, a Senior from Salem R-80 won the 8th Congressional District Competition with a work of the St. Jude Chapel in Montauk, MO. The piece was completed by burning a drawing of the church into a piece of wood.

“Avery’s piece really stood out to me. I have never seen anything like it and was really amazed by what she was able to do,” said Congressman Smith. Her work will look great in the hallways of the United States Capitol and I look forward to educating my colleagues on what her piece represents and how she completed it. Millions of visitors to our Nation’s Capital will now be able to view her work”

The work of the St. Jude Chapel will be displayed in the United States Capitol for a full year and Avery will receive two round trip tickets to Washington, D.C. to attend the Congressional Art Competition reception with other art competition winners from across the country.

There were six finalists in total from across southern Missouri. They were:

Alexis VanHoosier, 12th Grade, Farmington R-7

Emilia Torres, 11th Grade, Farmington R-7

Avery Coffman, 12th Grade, Salem R-80

Marlene Schuh, 11th Grade, Salem R-80

Rylie Nicole Coats, 9th Grade, West Plains High School

Sophie Bollinger, 12th Grade, Perryville High School

The evening started with Congressman Smith receiving a painting from 3rd grader Layla Burgfeld of Blanchard Elementary titled “Neon Puppy” (*attached photo*) and will be displayed in the Congressional office located in Cape Girardeau.

Smith also spent time speaking with finalists Sophie Bollinger of Perryville High School and Emilia Torres of Farmington. Bollinger intends to pursue art after graduation while Emilia plans to compete again in the Congressional Art Competition next year.

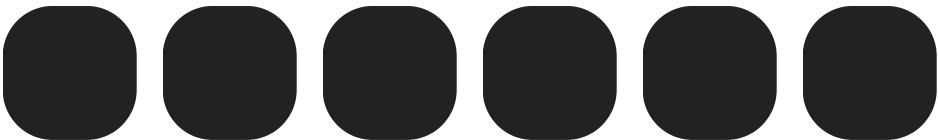
“All of these kids are so talented and I am honored that they are willing to display those talents through this friendly competition,” said Congressman Smith. “They are all going places and have big plans, but I know they will continue to be inspired by and hold close their roots here in southern Missouri.”

The Congressional Art Competition is an annual event for high school students held each spring.

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Blunt Opens Application Process for Missourians Seeking to Attend Service Academies

MAY 02ND 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Blunt Opens Application Process for Missourians Seeking to Attend Service Academies

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (Mo.) this week announced that he is accepting applications to service academies from interested Missourians. Nominations to the U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, U.S. Military Academy, and U.S. Naval Academy are available for qualified applicants.

“Service academies play a critical role in educating and inspiring the next generation of servicemen and women,” said Blunt. “These institutions improve leadership skills, build character, and offer invaluable opportunities for young Missourians who decide to pursue a career in our nation’s military.”

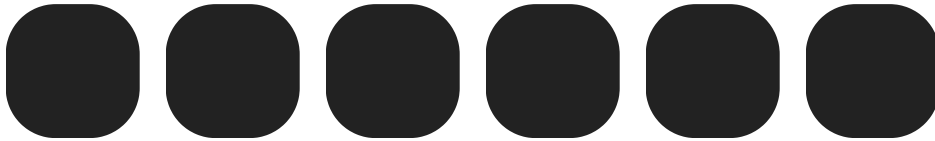
Applicants must be between 17 and 23 years of age, U. S. citizens, and legal residents of Missouri. A committee of Missouri residents will review applicants’ files and present their recommendations to Senator Blunt for a formal nomination in January. Nominees will be evaluated using the “equal and competitive” method for selection and on the basis of personal merit including, evidence of character, leadership, scholarship, and motivation.

Interested applicants can apply via a secure website, which will allow them to continually check the status of their application. The link to the application can be found on the Academy Application Process page of www.blunt.senate.gov. All application materials must be received on or before October 4, 2018.

The academy nomination process requires that students first open an application directly with the academies of their choice and then begin the nomination process with their congressional offices. For more information please contact Senator Blunt’s office at academy_nominations@blunt.senate.gov.

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Error: Filing Currently Unavailable

APRIL 23RD 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Error: Filing Currently Unavailable

**Congressman Smith Capitol Report
Error: Filing Currently Unavailable
April 20, 2018**

Millions of American's frustration with an outdated, broken and unfair tax code was met symbolically on Tuesday with news that their attempts to file their taxes online was currently 'unavailable' and that they should 'come back on Dec. 31, 9999.' That's right, the old, clunky and broken tax code – broke the IRS website. Frustrated Missourians who

had spent hours trying to do what's right, trying to comply with their tax obligations before the stated deadline, couldn't even do so because once again, government had failed them.

The good news is that it's finally over. This marks the last year you will have to file under the old and outdated tax system – as a result of President Trump signing the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act into law late last year, the new tax code he and I both authored will be in full effect when filing day returns one year from now. With it will come an easier process, one which is simpler, can be done on a single post card sized sheet of paper, and most important takes less money from you, your farm, your family or your business.

One of my biggest frustrations while serving as your voice in Congress has been watching unelected Washington bureaucrats, accountable to no one, spend spend spend taxpayer money with no consequences. Hand in hand with reducing the size and scope of your government, is reducing your tax burdens to allow you to keep more of what you make each year than send to Washington. It is my fundamental belief that you are the best steward of your valuable resources, that you know best how to save, invest and help grow your family and this economy – not someone who sits behind a desk in a federal agency all day and has never stepped foot in Missouri. In that same regard, I also don't think some politician whose latest idea to spend billions in taxpayer dollars to 'turn the economy around' will actually help our economy more than folks keeping more of their money and using their judgment to best benefit our economy. Simply put, you are best to make that decision, not your government.

Missourians are already benefiting from the new tax code, and getting rid of our antiquated filing process was the last step. Every single Missourian is operating under new tax withholding tables which are allowing them to keep more of each paycheck. In addition, wage increases, bonuses, increased benefits and retirement plus ups have been delivered to more than 4 million workers across the U.S. I visited some of those very workers at the AT&T Call Center in Cape Girardeau, at the Tyson Plant in Dexter, at the Home Depot in Poplar Bluff, at the CVS in Sikeston and at Missouri Hardwoods Flooring in Birch Tree to hear directly from them about plans for additional investments in their company or new wage increases and benefits as a result of the tax cuts bill.

Next year's filing will be a simple process – lower and simpler taxes mean you keep more and you file less. With the Standard Deduction doubling to \$24,000 per married couple, over 30 million less filers will be burdened with itemizing out every deduction. According to the Tax Foundation – under the old tax system, people spent 2.6 billion hours in complying with their returns, that's a whole lot of lost time with your family, on your

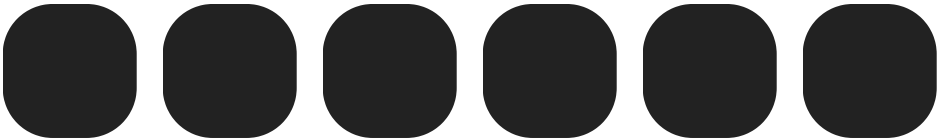
farm, or running your business – just to figure out how much you owed your government.

Making your government smaller, spending less and taxing less is a fight I will continue to wage. Saying goodbye to filing taxes under our old code was a major step, and one which ironically was met with even more government failure this week with the crashing of the tax filing system. But as we look forward to a new system which encourages businesses to hire and grow here in the U.S. and rewards folks for investing more in their family and free time than their government, I will continue the fight to make that same government work for you, and not the other way around.

LAST UPDATED ON APRIL 23RD 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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