



Lieutenant Governor _____
MIKE KEHOE

**CAPITOL
REPORT**



Week of Jan. 13, 2019

On Wednesday I was privileged to have a front-row seat to Governor Parson's State of the State Address to the 100th General Assembly. The State of the State offers governors the opportunity to present their budgets for the upcoming fiscal year and articulate their vision for the future. Each address is a direct reflection of the governor's style and priorities.

Governor Parson's speech yesterday was straight down the middle of the fairway, focusing on the overarching themes of his administration to date: workforce development and infrastructure. Though the focus was on themes he has articulated since his first day in office, he proposed a number of bold initiatives to support moving Missouri forward.

Workforce development is relatively simple in theory, but is complex in practice due to the diverse nature of businesses in Missouri. This diversity is great for the state's economy, but also presents challenges in ensuring the broad spectrum of businesses, many of which are both very technical and dynamic, have a work-ready pool of Missourians from which to hire. Designing training and education specifically for individual business and industries, or re-training employees in these necessary skills, synthesizes job demands with worker skills. The governor's vision for Missouri Fast Track, Missouri One Start, and Missouri Excels programs are to better target training and education to match Missourians with industry or workplace specific skills.

Access to data and information is critical to learning. Unfortunately, too many Missourians lack access to high-speed broadband at school or at home. This is a problem that we have the ability to fix, and I am grateful for the governor's willingness to devote state resources to dramatically increasing access to high-speed broadband statewide. These state funds, in combination with federal funds secured by US Senator Blunt and other members of Missouri's federal delegation, will go a long way to transform learning opportunities in many classrooms while also improving the quality of life in rural Missouri.

Transportation, and improving Missouri's transportation infrastructure, is one of the primary reasons I initially ran for office in 2010. Since that time, I have continued to advocate for investing in Missouri's roads and bridges for reasons of both safety and commerce. I wholly support the governor's plan to repair or replace 250 bridges across the state. MoDOT has a list of these bridges on the current State Transportation Improvement Plan, and immediate attention will protect Missourians and

their families for years to come. Specifically focusing on bridges, which now have a design life-span between 50 and 75 years, is a wise investment. Rough roads are annoying, but a closed bridge and the frequently lengthy detour associated with these closures, is a show-stopper in many cases. Focusing on bridges first will free up additional dollars in the future for roadway improvements. The governor's plan does not solve all of Missouri's transportation funding challenges, but it is a significant and much needed approach that proves the administration's willingness to take bold actions to address the needs of Missourians.

Just as the governor's infrastructure plan addressing 250 of the state's worst bridges is bold, so too is the commitment to state employees. The governor's budget includes a three percent across the board increase for state employees, as well as additional, targeted increases for Corrections Officers and market-equalizing increases throughout multiple departments.

I look forward to helping Governor Parson advance his agenda throughout the legislative session and am excited to see the positive impact his vision, when implemented, will have on Missouri. I do not take for granted the trust and responsibilities of this office, and consider myself very privileged to be a part of moving Missouri forward.

My purpose and my intent is to serve the constituents of the State of Missouri. If you are in the capitol during the coming weeks and months, please stop by YOUR OFFICE in Room 224.

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