



GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI
JEFFERSON CITY
65102

JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON
GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 720
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January 21, 2015

TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE PEOPLE OF MISSOURI:

By working together over the past six years, we have moved Missouri forward and maintained strong fiscal discipline. Our economy continues to accelerate. November numbers showed Missouri employers had added more than 42,000 jobs over the previous year and Missouri's unemployment rate stood at 5.6 percent, the lowest rate since May 2008.

Together, we have balanced the budget and downsized government, while investing in key priorities to continue moving our state forward. As a result, Missouri is one of only a few states to hold a spotless, AAA credit rating from all three rating agencies. This sound financial management and the continued growth of our economy will allow us to make targeted investments in the upcoming fiscal year.

Our top priorities will continue to unite us – investing in education to ensure the success of our students and the strength of our economy, providing vital health and mental health services, preserving critical infrastructure, and maintaining fiscal discipline.

- **Investing in education from preschool through college:** To build an economy to compete in the future, we must invest in students today. We must increase funding for early childhood education, K-12 classrooms, scholarships and performance funding for higher education, while continuing to demand greater accountability and results.
- **Strengthening our mental health safety net:** We must address gaps in mental health care by continuing both our successful Partnership for Hope Program and our effort to ensure there is no wait list for in-home Medicaid services for individuals with developmental disabilities. The most cost effective way to strengthen mental health services is to provide access to affordable health care to low-income, working Missourians through Medicaid expansion.
- **Expanding and reforming Medicaid:** Working Missourians deserve affordable health care. By expanding and reforming Medicaid, we can achieve that goal and bring our taxpayer dollars home to Missouri.
- **Preserving critical infrastructure:** We have an obligation to be good stewards of public assets. Through a fiscally responsible bond issuance we can make critical repairs and renovations to educational and state facilities.
- **Balancing the budget while holding the line on taxes:** We can make smart investments which will pay off for years to come while maintaining Missouri's status as a low-tax state.

I look forward to working with you on the important decisions that are before us. Together, we will keep Missouri moving forward.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon.

Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor