



GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI
JEFFERSON CITY
65102

JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON
GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 720
(573) 751-3222

January 21, 2014

TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE PEOPLE OF MISSOURI:

By working together over the last five years, we tackled historic challenges and made great strides in the Show-Me State. We have maintained strong fiscal discipline and our economy is moving full steam ahead. Missouri employers added more than 40,000 jobs over the last year and Missouri's unemployment rate has been below the national average for four years in a row.

Together, we have balanced the budget and held the line on taxes, while making strategic investments 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, along with the continued growth of our economy, will allow us to make needed investments in the upcoming budget.

Our top priorities will continue to unite us – investing in education, creating jobs for Missourians, providing vital health and mental health services and keeping our fiscal house in order.

- **Investing in and improving education at all levels:** To build an economy to compete in the future, we must invest in students today. With high expectations and strong accountability, we will increase funding for early childhood education, K-12 classrooms, scholarships and performance funding for higher education as well as make targeted investments in science, technology, engineering and math.
- **Helping businesses continue to create jobs:** By investing in our workforce, providing startup capital for small businesses, ramping up efforts to increase exports, and continuing to make government more efficient, we will further expand opportunities for Missouri businesses to grow and create jobs.
- **Strengthening our mental health safety net:** We will address gaps in mental health care by expanding our successful Partnership for Hope Program, eliminating the wait list for in-home Medicaid services for the developmentally disabled, continuing our strategic initiative in mental health and rebuilding Fulton State Hospital. Our most significant investment to improve mental health services will be expanding Medicaid to low-income, working Missourians.
- **Expanding and reforming Medicaid:** Each day we don't act, we send our taxpayer dollars to other states, go another day without adding protections for taxpayers and leave nearly 300,000 Missourians without health care. We must work together, now, to get the job done.
- **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 handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jay Nixon', written over a blue ink stamp of the signature.

Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor