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Final State Budget Weakens Missouri's Physical, Economic Infrastructure

The budget bills signed by Governor Jay Nixon demonstrate the clear need for Missouri to enact revenue measures that will protect and strengthen the assets that we all rely on for the foundation of our quality of life.

“Missouri's baby boomers built communities with strong public structures to invest in their children and grandchildren, like quality schools and roads and affordable colleges, said Craig Eichelman, State Director of AARP Missouri. “Unfortunately, the investments made by previous generations are eroding. Schools are crowded, tuition is skyrocketing, roads are crumbling and thousands of people are going without needed health care.”

Instead of passing common-sense reforms that would address these issues now and in the future, the budget relies on several gimmicks that will likely necessitate mid-year cuts. These budgeting maneuvers include the reliance on unusually strong growth in lottery proceeds and the assumption that policymakers can foresee state expenditures down to the penny, demonstrated by the budget's failure to include any reserves.

“Elected officials no longer can rely solely on cuts to balance the state's budget. They must take steps to bolster state revenue and generate the resources needed to build a stronger future for Missouri and invest in high-quality children's services, good schools and affordable colleges,” said Anne Silea, Advocacy Facilitator for Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri.

Without affordable quality education, services, and infrastructure, Missouri will face increasing difficulty attracting and maintaining business, hurting its ability to compete in a global economy and rebuild from the recession.

Some common sense options to address Missouri's ongoing revenue shortfalls including closing the tax loophole on Internet sales and increasing the state's tobacco tax. Revenue measures stalled in legislative committees.

“Hard-working Missourians have invested in their families and communities, but by failing to enact tax amnesty, the streamlined sales tax, an increased tobacco tax, or other reforms, the state has failed to invest in Missourians,” said Traci Gleason of the Missouri Budget Project.