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Senate Opening Weeks in Review

Frankfort—As your State Senator – your voice in Frankfort – I can tell you that we in the Kentucky State Senate are already moving forward and conducting the people’s business. My first actions in this year’s session were to cosponsor Senate Bills 1 and 4.

We can already claim one important victory for the citizens of Kentucky: We succeeded in passing SB 1 out of the Senate. The bill, which I was honored to introduce for the floor vote, is legislation that would put a constitutional amendment on the ballot this November for your consideration. When passed, it would allow legislators to address several different reforms to fix Kentucky’s medical malpractice insurance crisis.

Without the amendment, however, the General Assembly *cannot* pass any reforms that work within our constitutional framework to fix the medical malpractice insurance problems. Currently, there are no ob-gyns in 71 out of Kentucky’s 120 counties. If we do not pass this constitutional amendment, statistics like this will only get worse, leaving more Kentuckians without proper medical services. That’s why I hope you will please contact your state representative to ask him to support SB1 when the House takes up the legislation.

The second major issue we worked on during the first two weeks was SB4, fetal homicide legislation. I am also a cosponsor of this bill, which would recognize the death of an unborn child as criminal homicide if the death were caused under circumstances that constitute murder, manslaughter in the first or second degree, or reckless homicide. It was passed out of the Judiciary Committee and will likely be debated by the Senate members in the next few days.

We took the first step in ridding Northern Kentucky of the time-consuming and unnecessary tailpipe test by voting SJR 3 out of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee with a favorable report. The resolution would close all the Northern Kentucky Emissions Check Programs by November 1, 2004. This bill should also be brought up for a vote soon.

I am proud to have sponsored the following resolutions:

- SR 15 expresses gratitude and appreciation for the contributions and sacrifices of the United States Armed Forces during the liberation of Iraq.

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- SR 23 adjourned the Senate in loving memory and honor of Robert C. "Bucky" Robinson.

Additionally, I cosponsored SR 22, which recognized Jan. 14, 2004, as Disabilities Awareness Day.

We are only two weeks into session but have made good progress thus far. We will continue moving forward through the next three months making progress for all Kentuckians. For further information on pending legislation and the General Assembly, please visit the Legislative Research Commission Web site at www.lrc.state.ky.us. If you have any questions or concerns, please call me on the toll-free message line at 1-800-372-7181. The TTY message line is also toll-free, 1-800-896-0305.

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Note: For a high-res. JPEG file of Sen. Thayer, please log on to <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/pubinfo/senate38.htm>.