

Guest Editorial

(Owen/Grant/Scott)

CONTACT:

Lourdes Báez-Schrader
(502) 564 - 3120



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Senator Damon Thayer

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Report from Frankfort

Frankfort – As I complete my third week of the 2004 General Assembly, the Senate is continuing to forge ahead on critical issues.

First and foremost, the lives of the unborn are too precious for partisan politics. I am therefore proud to sponsor Senate Bill 4, the fetal homicide bill, which passed the Senate in a bipartisan vote this week. The bill will recognize the death of an unborn child as criminal homicide if the death is caused under circumstances that constitute murder, manslaughter in the first or second degree, or reckless homicide. Endorsed by the Governor, SB 4 will bring Kentucky in line with the 35 other states throughout the country – including California - that already recognize fetal homicide as a crime. The bill now goes before the House for approval.

Another bill we passed was Senate Bill 77, a bill that will reorganize the Department of Agriculture. Let me assure you, all programs are functional but this reorganization recognizes opportunities to increase efficiency and productivity to better serve our citizens. The estimated costs savings is between \$300,000 and \$350,000.

Many of you listened as Governor Fletcher in his State of the Commonwealth address made tax reform a priority. I am committed to the idea that an overhaul of Kentucky's tax code should be fair, adequate, and revenue-neutral. It should not be a euphemism for an across-the-board tax increase. That said, some taxes may be lowered while others are raised. The code should be modernized to reflect our economy. It should be flexible, elastic, and dynamic enough to encourage businesses to move into Kentucky and current businesses to flourish, increase families' financial stability, and keep our young people in state with attractive, stable jobs. Our

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tax code must allow revenue to grow with us, not hold us back. When we receive the budget proposal from the House, I will do my best to make sure that our values are expressed.

And on the subject of budget priorities, I pledge to maintain my commitment to education. This week, I met with Governor Fletcher and Dr. James Votruba, President of Northern Kentucky University, regarding funding issues. I can assure you that I will be working closely with these people over the course of the next few months to ensure fairness in funding for our regional university and our community colleges.

As the Session progresses, I will continue to stay in touch with you of the accomplishments and challenges. I need your input about the many issues that affect all of us. Please feel free to call me any time at 800/372-7181.

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Note: For a high-resolution .jpeg of any of Senator Thayer, please log onto www.lrc.state.ky.us/pubinfo/epphoto.htm.