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**Capitol Report
January 10, 2019**

2019 Legislative Session Begins

The members of the historic 100th General Assembly gathered in the State Capitol Wednesday for the opening of the 2019 legislative session. This session the Missouri House of Representatives welcomes fifty-six first-time members, who took the oath of office alongside 106 returning members. The House now has 115 Republicans and 47 Democrats with one seat currently vacant. In comparison, the Missouri Senate now has a split of 24 Republicans and 10 Democrats.

House Speaker Haahr Outlines Priorities during Opening Day Address

Following his election by acclamation, new House Speaker Elijah Haahr delivered an opening day address that outlined his policy priorities for the 2019 session. The Speaker talked about how the first General Assembly two centuries ago represented a state of 66,000 citizens and the 100th General Assembly now represents a state of more than 6 million. Haahr reminded his colleagues that they are the voices of the people and the House Chamber is “a meeting place that unites us as a state.”

Haahr noted in his address that the state is at record low unemployment, the tourism industry is booming, and the state’s geographic location in the middle of the country gives it a natural advantage as it competes for commerce. Despite the success the state has seen, Haahr said the legislature cannot rest. He told his colleagues, “This year we will create bold solutions for the challenges faced by every Missourian.”

As Haahr outlined his priorities for the legislative session, he focused on:

- Passing policies that cultivate employers rather than control businesses.
- Building on the historic tax relief passed by the legislature and continuing to balance the budget without raising taxes on Missourians.
- Continuing the legislature’s commitment to fully fund the school foundation formula. Haahr noted that “the way we spend educational dollars is as important as how much we spend. We need schools that challenge yet support our students.”
- Developing 21st century colleges to help create a 21st century workforce.
- Continuing to lead the charge to confront the opioid epidemic raging across the state.
- Providing opportunities to those in a broken criminal justice system by passing more reforms that build on the reforms made last year to Missouri’s sentencing laws.

House and Senate Members Hold Joint Session and Reception to Commemorate 100th General Assembly

After both the House and Senate wrapped up their typical opening day proceedings, the two legislative bodies convened a joint session in the House Chamber to celebrate the historic 100th General Assembly.

2019 marks two milestone events in Missouri’s history. The First General Assembly of the future State of Missouri convened at the Missouri Hotel in St. Louis on September 19, 1820—nearly a year before the state was officially admitted into the Union. The first legislature also designated St. Charles as the temporary capital and appointed a commission to report on the site for the permanent capital.

To commemorate these events, the General Assembly held a joint session upon the adjournment of each chamber’s regular session.



I appreciate your trust and confidence and it is an honor to serve you.

Dan Houx