

Governor Matt Blunt

Matt Blunt was elected as Missouri's 54th Governor by more than 80,000 votes on November 2, 2004, carrying 101 of the state's 114 counties. Gov. Blunt was elected on a platform of leadership, change, economic growth, and a renewed commitment to public education.

Gov. Blunt was able to transform the budget, which was saddled with an inherited deficit of \$1.1 billion into three consecutive surplus budgets. Applying Missouri common sense to the budget crisis, he restored fiscal responsibility with no new job-killing taxes.

His policies of change increased education funding by \$1.2 billion, helped create tens of thousands of new jobs, reformed numerous areas of law and regulation, and enacted three major tax cuts.

Governor Matt Blunt was born on November 20, 1970 in Strafford, Missouri. In 1993, he graduated from the United States Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science in History. He went on to serve as an Engineering Officer aboard the USS JACK WILLIAMS (FFG-24) and as the Navigator and Administrative Officer on the USS PETERSON (DD-969). Lieutenant Commander Blunt was mobilized to Commander Naval Activities in the United Kingdom in October of 2001 in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. Gov. Blunt served six months in Operation Enduring Freedom and is the only statewide official in Missouri history called to active military duty in wartime. While in the Navy, he received four Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals as well as numerous other awards.

Gov. Blunt also served as a member of the Missouri General Assembly (1999-2001) and Secretary of State (2001-2005). As Secretary of State, he led the successful effort to modernize state election law and introduced technology to the office's operations, enabling businesses and others to file necessary documents and find information conveniently and at much-reduced cost for customers and taxpayers.

He kept his pledge of no new taxes on Missourians and enacted three major reductions in the tax burden. Gov. Blunt signed legislation to phase out state taxation of Social Security benefits earned by Missouri seniors. He also cut taxes to protect manufacturing jobs and provided tax relief to Missouri families for their health care coverage.

Gov. Blunt promised to make education his highest priority. He never withheld appropriated funds for K-12 education just as he had promised. Again, just as he pledged, he increased education funding at every level, from pre-school to post graduate education. In four budgets, he delivered \$1.2 billion in new support for education, the largest education funding increase without new taxes in state history.

For higher education, Gov. Blunt helped tens of thousands of Missouri students afford college, by nearly quadrupling funding for needs-based scholarships. In 2007, he signed an historic higher education package for Missouri students that created a new comprehensive scholarship program for students with the greatest needs, introduces new accountability for schools, provides tuition cost controls and implements his landmark Lewis and Clark Discovery

Initiative, which provides \$335 million for new state-of-the-art learning centers for Missouri students. All of this was accomplished without a tax increase.

Gov. Blunt has championed the critical subject areas of math, engineering, technology and science so Missouri students can compete and lead in the global economy. Under his leadership, hundreds of Advanced Placement teachers have been trained and are helping more students take Advanced Placement math and science tests. More technologically-advanced classrooms have been built and afterschool programs in math and science have been funded. Gov. Blunt also signed legislation creating the P-20 council which is designed to ensure a more seamless transition through every level of education.

To restore a strong economic climate, he pushed forward pro-jobs, pro-growth initiatives. Missouri had lost 34,000 jobs in the four years before the Blunt Administration. The improvements Gov. Blunt made to Missouri's entrepreneurial climate led to the creation of nearly 80,000 jobs between January 2005 and April 2008. Gov. Blunt signed into law litigation reform to address a health care crisis that was driving doctors out of the state at the expense of patients.

Gov. Blunt's enactment of lawsuit reform improved the state's economic and business climate. The United States Chamber of Commerce's ranking of the states' legal climate has moved Missouri in the right direction every year since his reforms took effect and Missouri has moved ahead of ten states since the governor was elected. Now, small businesses can again go about creating jobs without paralyzing worry about frivolous lawsuits or runaway personal injury awards. Gov. Blunt also signed regulatory reforms to lower cost for small businesses, giving them freedom to create jobs and stimulate the state's economy.

The Missouri Quality Jobs Act of 2005 is a new approach to economic development and a new tool to attract family-supporting jobs with health care coverage. In 2006, he launched the Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri (DREAM) Initiative to help small and medium communities achieve downtown revitalization.

Gov. Blunt has also kept his commitment to responsible, efficient and effective government. He was the only governor in the country to receive an A for fiscal discipline from the Cato institute. His efforts have saved hundreds of millions of dollars. He reduced the state work force to fewer than 60,000 employees for the first time in years and eliminated more than 235,000 square feet of wasted office space. He also increased transparency with the creation of the Missouri Accountability Portal so Missourians can go online to see how their tax dollars are being spent. Americans for Tax Reform lauded Gov. Blunt for creating the site to increase fiscal transparency calling him "one of the first governors to enable taxpayers to become fiscal watchdogs" and encouraging other governors to follow his lead.

When Gov. Blunt took office the old Medicaid system was bankrupting the state. Most concerning to the governor was its failure to help Missourians who needed help the most. He saved Medicaid by eliminating waste and fraud, and ending abuse by providers and ineligible recipients who were costing millions of dollars that should have been used for Missouri's most vulnerable. Gov. Blunt then took action to replace the failing Medicaid system with a new and

innovative program called Mo HealthNet to focus on prevention, wellness and other common sense health care solutions ignored by the old system.

Gov. Blunt has taken aggressive steps to keep dangerous sexual predators away from Missouri's children. Missouri now has one of the nation's strongest versions of Jessica's Law to ensure sex offenders who commit sex crimes against young children stay in jail at least 30 years and are monitored their entire lives. He also signed a law that made Missouri one of the first states to utilize global positioning satellite (GPS) technology to track dangerous sex offenders. In addition, he expanded the sex offender registry and added new tools to make it a more powerful resource for parents.

In 2006, Gov. Blunt signed legislation to set a 10 percent ethanol content standard for gasoline. The Missouri Renewable Fuel Standard Act is a major step to position Missouri as a leader in ethanol production and use. The new standard is also helping protect Missouri's environment. Ethanol is a cleaner burning alternative to petroleum based gasoline and contains more oxygen, which results in better combustion and fewer carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and carcinogenic emissions.

Gov. Blunt supports proactive solutions to save energy. The governor's leadership has led to innovative programs within state government that once fully implemented will both reduce energy use and save taxpayers nearly \$16 million in energy costs every year. These initiatives include a range of projects from centralizing and monitoring statewide energy consumption to utilizing landfill gases as a heating source. Gov. Blunt also issued an executive order requiring that at least 70 percent of new vehicles purchased by the Office of Administration be flexible fuel vehicles.

Additionally, the legislature also approved Gov. Blunt's plan to create a Show-Me Green tax holiday, forgiving state sales tax on Energy-Star certified appliances for one week every year. Missouri is only the fourth state in the country to enact this environmentally-friendly tax holiday joining Connecticut, Florida and Virginia.

Gov. Blunt strongly supports lawful immigration and welcomes legal immigrants, but he has taken some of the most significant steps in the country to fight illegal activity in Missouri. The governor stated he would not wait for Washington to address the threat of illegal immigration. Gov. Blunt led the fight against illegal immigration and in 2008 Missouri's General Assembly approved his proposals to ban the creation of sanctuary cities, require verification of legal employment status of every public employee, cancel state contracts with contractors who hire illegals, ban driver licenses for illegal immigrants, make it a crime to help an illegal obtain a driver license and criminalize the transportation of illegal immigrants for purposes of human trafficking, drug trafficking, prostitution or illegal labor.

Gov. Blunt is a lifelong supporter of the Second Amendment. He signed legislation to guarantee Missourians' right to bear arms, especially in times of emergency, and the "Castle Doctrine," codifying the right to self-defense and family defense if attacked. The governor also secured laws to prevent the abuse of eminent domain and protect property rights.

In 2005, Gov. Blunt became the first pro-life governor in Missouri since John Ashcroft left office in January 1993 and he kept his promise to defend the sanctity and dignity of life. In 2005, he called a special session to pass important pro-life legislation including enhancing parental consent laws. Gov. Blunt enacted an income tax credit for pregnancy resource centers, added nearly \$1.4 million for the Alternatives to Abortion program and made the program permanent, prohibited abortion providers from teaching sex education in Missouri classrooms, required abortion doctors to meet the same health standards as other doctors and ended taxpayer money going to Planned Parenthood.

Gov. Blunt was named as one of the 10 Outstanding Young Americans by the Jaycees (September 2005) and was twice named as one of the Ten Who Made a Difference by Southern Business and Development (April 2006 and April 2008). He has received the Biotechnology Industry Organization's Award for Leadership Excellence (September 2005), was honored three times by the Missouri Corn Grower's Association with their Friend of Corn Growers Award (January 2006) and the organization's President's Award (February 2007 and March 2008) as well as numerous other awards for his support of the business community, the arts, children's health, Missouri agriculture, community colleges and healthcare innovation. Gov. Blunt is a member of American Legion and he attends a Baptist church near his home.

With Gov. Blunt's leadership and record of accomplishment, Missourians are enjoying increased prosperity and our state has become an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

Gov. Blunt, his wife Melanie and their son William Branch live in the Governor's Mansion in Jefferson City.