

MISSOURIAN

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Nixon calls for ethics reform after resignations

Speech comes after controversies over Sen. Paul LaVota and House Speaker John Diehl

By **SUMMER BALLENTINE**
The Associated Press

Missouri's Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon said Tuesday that state ethics laws need to be revamped in light of accusations that led to the resignations of two state lawmakers this year.

Nixon criticized the culture of the Capitol during remarks at a school administrators' conference in Columbia, calling the state the "Wild West" of ethics laws.

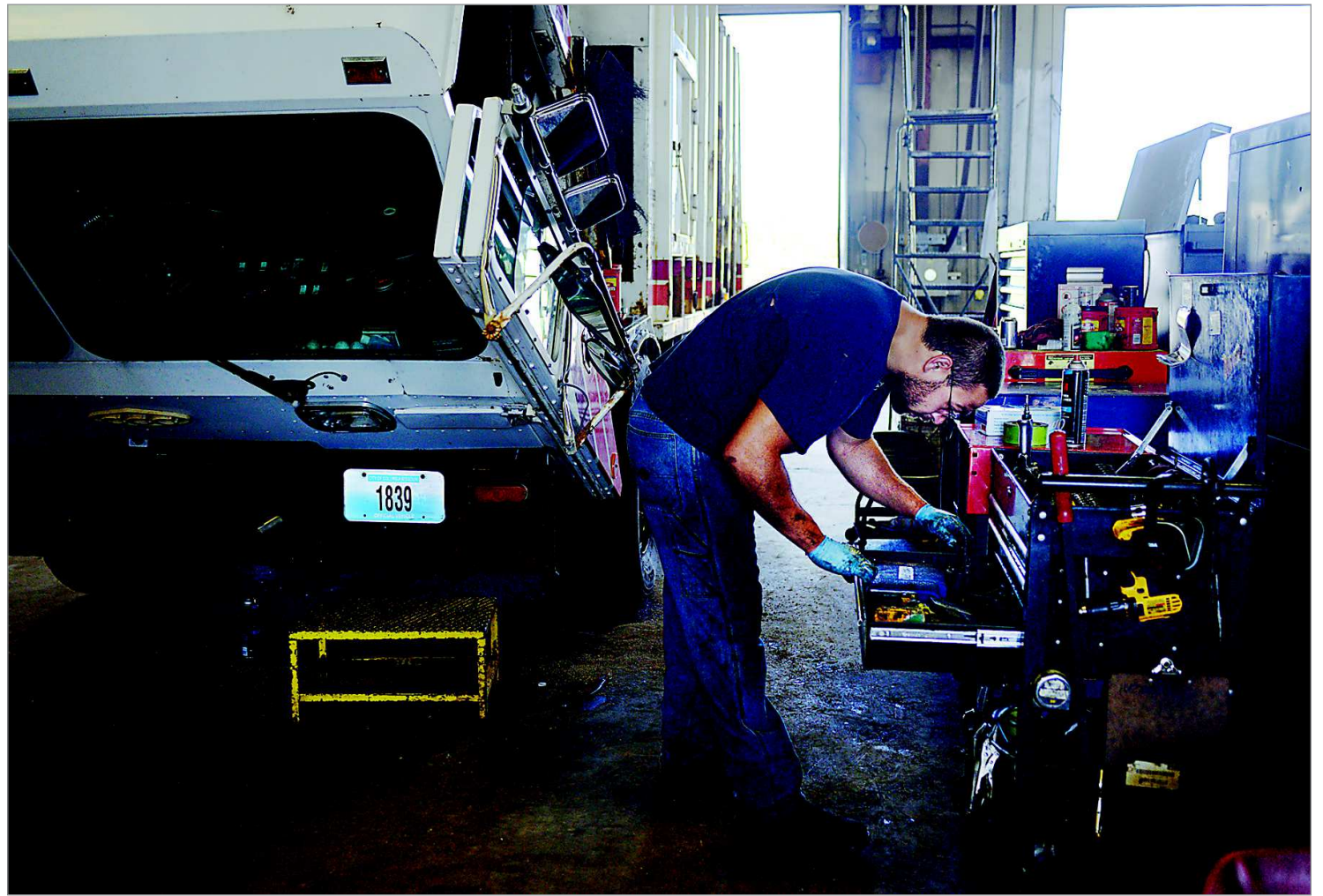
Missouri appears to be the only state with the trio of unlimited campaign contributions, unlimited lobbyist gifts and the ability for lawmakers to immediately become lobbyists after leaving office. Nixon called on lawmakers to end that next session.

The governor's comments came only days after Sen. Paul LeVota, D-Independence, announced plans to resign following allegations that he made unwanted sexual advances toward interns, with one former intern accusing him of sexual harassment. Former Republican House Speaker John Diehl resigned on the last day of session in May after admitting to exchanging sexually suggestive text messages with a Capitol intern.

Lawmakers failed in this past session to pass legislation to change state ethics laws, and have been similarly unsuccessful in recent years.

Nixon said the next legislative session could be different partly because he said there's public support for such changes and partly because of what he said have been "high-profile challenges" lawmakers have faced during a tumultuous year in Missouri politics.

Lawmakers have shown interest in changing ethics laws. The Senate majority leader had said the main sticking point was a \$25 gift limit for lawmakers that senators felt could drive lobbyist spending underground.



Mechanic Josh Anderson works on a refuse truck's air brake system July, 13th in the Grissum Building. Workers here maintain city vehicles such as buses, garbage trucks, police cruisers, firetrucks and snow plows.

BEATRIZ COSTA-LIMA/Missourian

Gearing up to repair Grissum

Story by Phillip Sitter

The garages inside the Grissum Building off Business Loop 70 are a gearhead's paradise.

Inside, parked city buses and firetrucks are surrounded by work tables and tools — wrenches, ladders, work lights, screwdrivers, air drills, oily rags.

Four city public works divisions — solid waste, street, transit and fleet operations — operate out of the building at 1313 Lakeview Ave. The fleet operations division oversees the maintenance of every city vehicle.

Please see **GRISSUM**, page 6A



In a series of stories examining infrastructure projects listed for funding through the 2015 capital sales tax, this Missourian report covers repairs needed for the Grissum Building, which services city vehicles such as buses and firetrucks. Voters will decide Tuesday whether to extend the sales tax for another 10 years.

Planned Parenthood picketed ahead of abortion appointments

The clinic on Providence is expected to again offer abortions in August

By **SARAH FINE**
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Stephen Smith knelt beside the sidewalk in front of the Columbia Health Center. His three daughters, Gracie, 9, Claire, 6, and Rachel, 4, crouched in the narrow strip of grass alongside their father as he led them in quiet prayer.

The Smiths were among about 50 anti-abortion protestors who braved Tuesday's midday sun — the National Weather Service warned the heat index could reach 117 degrees — to picket in front of Columbia's Planned Parenthood. The protest was part of a national event held by Women Branded, an anti-abortion organization that aims to eliminate public funding for Planned Parenthood. The location on Providence Road is officially called the Columbia Health Center.

About 30 Planned Parenthood supporters also demonstrated. The two groups didn't interact much, other than to try to drown out one another's speeches by setting off car alarms.

The rally came two days before the center will begin taking appointments for abortions. Columbia Health Center will be the only abortion provider in mid-Missouri. Because of



Anti-abortion protestor Stephen Smith, of Eldon, kneels and prays Tuesday alongside his daughters, from counterclockwise, Gracie, 9, Claire, 6, and Rachel, 4, at a Planned Parenthood demonstration in Columbia.

JOHN BAT/Missourian

the 72-hour waiting period, the first day that abortions can be administered will be Aug. 3. It also coincided with the Center for Medical Progress, an anti-abortion group, releasing a third video purporting to show Planned Parenthood officials discussing selling fetal tissue. The video released Tuesday morning portrays a physician examining

aborted fetal tissue and listing the prices of each part of tissue to a man acting as a buyer.

Selling fetal tissue for research purposes, with a patient's consent, is legal in the United States; however, it is illegal to profit from such sales.

Tuesday's rally consisted mostly

Please see **PROTESTS**, page 4A

U.S. to pay \$191 million to farmers for avian flu

By **DAVID PITT**
The Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — The U.S. government expects to spend \$191 million to pay chicken and turkey farmers for birds lost to avian flu, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Tuesday as he called for Congress to consider a disaster program for poultry producers similar to that for other livestock farmers.

That's just a fraction of the federal government's \$700 million price tag for what is considered by many to be the worst animal disease disaster to hit the nation, Vilsack said. The government has spent \$400 million on cleaning up dead birds and disinfecting and is paying to research and stockpile a bird flu vaccine in case the virus returns.

The bird flu killed 48 million birds, mostly turkeys and egg-laying chickens in 15 states as it swept through the Midwest. Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri lost the most birds.

Vilsack spoke Tuesday at a bird flu conference in Des Moines, where the poultry industry and agriculture officials are talking about how to make farms more secure and how to better respond if the virus is again dropped on

farms from waterfowl migrating south this fall. The conference was closed to the public and the media except for opening speeches by Vilsack and Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad. Organizers said they wanted to ensure an open discussion of what went wrong and how to improve responses.

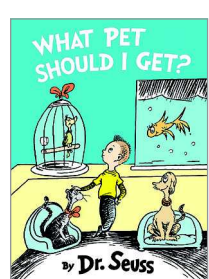
Bird flu killed 48 million birds, mostly egg-laying hens and turkeys. Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota lost the most birds.

"I do think we'd be better off as a nation if we had for poultry producers a disaster program similar to what we have for livestock producers," Vilsack said. It would be less costly to the government than dealing with outbreaks as individual disasters, he said.

Of the 211 U.S. commercial poultry barns affected by the bird flu, 90 have been cleaned and disinfected and nearly 70 are ready to bring in new birds, Vilsack said. By the end of September, infected farms should be ready to restock, he said.

Branstad worries about a return of bird flu. The state's egg production fell 44 percent last month from a year ago after losing nearly 32 million birds, mostly egg-laying hens, to flu.

"We want to be as prepared as we can and do what we can from a biosecurity perspective to avoid it recurring or having it spread like it did this spring," he said.



NEW SEUSS

A new Dr. Seuss book has been found and released. The story, "What Pet Should I Get?" explores what happened before "One Fish, Two Fish," and was among several texts discovered and then set aside by his wife in 1991. **Page 8A**

MICHAEL SAM

The former Missouri defensive end, who became the first openly gay player drafted by an NFL team, will make his debut with the Montreal Alouettes in August. **Page 2B**

TODAY'S WEATHER

Today: Mostly sunny with 30 percent chance of showers.
Temp: 87°
Tonight: Partly cloudy.
Temp: 66°
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