By Gwen Moore
For The St. Louis American

We need to focus on what makes sense for the common good. For public services. Amendment 7 on the August ballot is a regressive tax that will not benefit urban or rural areas equally. It is not a fair tax. The tax, urban taxpayers will pay for most local rural roads. In other states, rural taxpayers pay for most local roads. In other states, urban taxpayers will pay for less. The tax will hurt the most.

The state and local sales tax rate in Missouri is already the 14th highest in the nation – higher than states like California. MoDOT already receives more money than other states based on size in land area or population. But MoDOT has double the road miles as expected by size. More than 75 percent of their road budgets are local rural roads. In other states, rural taxpayers pay for most local rural roads. Unlike with the federal funds, urban taxpayers will pay more than they’ll receive. The amount transferred to counties is heavily weighted for rural land value. Urban areas could be more likely to use the funds for public transportation if our taxes were more fairly distributed.

And more jobs for the black contractors who called for projects on construction projects? The simple truth is that even with another stimulus funds, MoDOT’s expedience did not produce job growth in Missouri compared to other states. We can expect no difference from the billions to be spent if Amendment 7 passes.

Amendment 7 simply takes $5 billion from Missouri taxpayers and hands it over to contractors and consultants (many of them located out of state). There is no benefit to the state; unless you believe that spending by MoDOT is better than spending by all of us.

For the everyday economy coming from Amendment 7 will be in the millions of dollars spent in advertising on this election by contractors and engineers firms to convince you to vote for this irresponsible tax.

MoDOT has made a number of bad judgments in the past, and we can expect no difference in the future. MoDOT was proud to spend the first stimulus funds in 2008 to build a bridge to 278 people. For years, MoDOT demanded that the Moab connector be a bridge. Now we have a bridge, but other roads have the same grade. Over 10,000 people, the majority of maintenance funds on local rural roads. It is a fact that the local rural roads represent only 22 percent of the travels. It has been truly bad judgment for MoDOT to accept its system twice the miles of local roads as other states have done.

MoDOT has had too many local rural roads for years, so why is a tax needed now? In 2012 a new federal transportation law requires states to prioritize projects based on professional standards or be penalized. Since 2012 MoDOT has been making long-needed improvements to the state system twice the miles of local roads as other states have done. MoDOT has had too many local rural roads for years, so why is a tax needed now?

Vote NO on Amendment 7

For The St. Louis American • JULY 31 - AUG 6, 2014

The Metropolitan Chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. will hold the 8th Annual Health Fair and School Supply Giveaway at the Teen Center at YMCA 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday August 2. The AKA chapters of Gamma Omega, Omicron Eta Omega and Omicron Theta Omega all came together to support this community event. This year the health fair will also include a workshop on home buying and financial literacy.

The Children’s Service Fund provides vital resources to our county’s most vulnerable youth. Steve is committed to ending years of mismanagement and ensuring that every dollar paid into the Fund is invested to improve the quality of life for our children’s county.

The St. Louis American has teamed up with the St. Louis County Executive to bring you our Silver Sponsor, AKA to host health fair.

Vote YES on Amendment 7

By Ronny Griffin
For The St. Louis American

Missouri voters have the opportunity to decide the future of Missouri’s transportation system. Amendment 7, placed on the ballot by the Missouri Legislature, is a three percent increase in the state sales tax. What that means is that for every $10 you spend, there is an additional 7.5 percent tax that is collected to the state. The sales tax rests on transportation in Missouri. That is not even the cost of most of the goods people buy.

Food, prescription medicine, gas and housing are not taxed. In other words, the basic essentials we need every day are not part of this tax increase. I bring up this point because those people that don’t like the tax, contend it will hurt some families, like those who can’t pay more in taxes, but looks like the everyday people we all spend money on will not be part of Amendment 7.

The money collected by Amendment 7 will only be spent on transportation roads. Fifty percent of the money collected by the Missouri Department of Transportation, from the state sales tax, is to counties. The cities and counties can set the money on all type of transportation need in their community. After 10 years, the tax will expire unless we, the voters, decide to do a good thing to do and keep it.

So why support Amendment 7? All of us rely on transportation, whether it is by using our own vehicles or by taking the bus or Metro trains every day of our lives to get somewhere; work, the store or to a friend’s house. If the roads we use are in poor condition, it may take longer to get to the places we need to go, or if there are too many potholes on the roads, it can damage our vehicles. In an emergency, it may take longer for the fire truck or ambulance to respond. And, we have all already seen in the St. Louis area the impact on bus and mass transit service if there is not enough money to operate these systems; a reduction in the number of buses and elimination of routes was threatened until more funding was secured.

Missouri does not make much, if any, money available for mass transit, but cities and counties can use their share of Amendment 7 monies for these services, along with bike paths and walking trails. Without a good transportation system, businesses would not come to St. Louis and without business, we wouldn’t have jobs. Enough said on that point.

Amendment 7 will be on the ballot and I encourage everyone to vote YES on Amendment 7. The transportation system is too important for us to mess up.

Ronny Griffin is business agent for Laborers’ Local 110.

Visits not your daily news.

MEDICAID EXPANSION

Steve sponsored and voted in favor of a county health expansion calling for full Medicaid expansion to cover low-wage workers. Steve believes everyone in St. Louis County deserves access to quality health care cover-age.

AKA to host health fair

The AKA chapters of Gamma Omega, Omicron Eta Omega and Omicron Theta Omega have teamed up to support this community event. This year the health fair will also include a workshop on home buying and financial literacy.

Steve knows that education is the foundation of thriving communities. As County Executive, he will always advocate on behalf of county children and support building strong sustainable communities schools.