

Opinion

The Daily Times

Sen. Doug Overbey earns his pay filing common-sense bills

If all of the members of the Tennessee General Assembly worked as hard and as enthusiastically as State Senator Doug Overbey of Maryville, we would undoubtedly have an even better state. He represents Blount and Sevier counties.

While Senator Overbey and Governor Phil Bredesen are of different political parties, they have generally held common-sense approaches to problems and treated state government more like a business.

The big difference between business and government is that when government doesn't make ends meet it increases taxes; when a business doesn't make ends meet it either takes positive corrective action or goes out of business.

Senator Overbey has an advantage which those of us not well versed in details of laws lack. As a well qualified attorney, he can and does try to propose common-sense legislation that means what it says. We feel like over the years we have had too many strictly politically oriented attorneys in the legislature who perhaps deliberately included loopholes in legislation which undermined the intent of the law.

Too often the public sees business interests as it applies to "big" business. To the contrary, at least 65 percent of the businesses are small businesses, Mom-and-Pop type operations. Blount County alone has about 5,300 licensed businesses. About 75 percent of new jobs come from existing business and industry.

Some 67 percent of all jobs are provided by small businesses.

Senator Overbey was recently applauded by the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce for his "100 percent business-positive, pro jobs voting record," one of eight best pro-business legislators.

He either initiated or was strongly supportive of six key pieces of legislation enacted this past session:

■ Senate Bill 3049 which

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On Senator Overbey

expanded the state's tax credit program by \$80 million, an innovative new program providing investment capital to small businesses in Tennessee and is considered a model job growth plan by other states.

■ Senate Bill 3522 which updates and improves the state's trust laws to keep the state competitive as a prime place for investments. It updates and adds flexibility in administering trust estates and placing Tennessee ahead of other states in desirability for trust administration.

■ Senate Bill 3519 that provides assistance to homeowners who are about to lose their home due to non-payment and gives them the opportunity to contact their lender in an effort to avoid foreclosure.

■ Senate Bill 2721 which closes a loophole in state law that has allowed sexual predators to escape on a technicality.

■ Senate Bill 2505 ensuring that school gymnasiums are equipped with automatic external defibrillators which will dramatically reduce the fatality rate due to unexpected cardiac arrest.

■ Senate Bill 3528 that prevents potentially catastrophic cuts to Tennessee hospitals proposed in the budget earlier in the year. Allowing for a draw down of federal funds through a temporary Medicaid match program which would allow many hospitals, especially in rural areas, to avoid severe consequences and possible closure.

Not anyone can please everyone. We do not always totally agree with Senator Overbey's views. However, he makes himself readily available to the public and to hear both sides of issues. And above all, we think he "earns his keep" through his hard-working effort as a state senator.