

MSMA President Issued Statewide Media Statement Today (May 15)

Doctors Disappointed in Failed Override of Tort Reform

JEFFERSON CITY --- The Missouri State Medical Association (MSMA) which represents more than 6,000 physicians statewide, expressed strong disappointment in the failed override of Governor Bob Holden's veto of House Bill 1304, the tort reform package which passed the General Assembly with bipartisan support earlier in the session.

"The physicians of the state are gravely disappointed because the efforts to ensure patients' access to care was not recognized in the failed attempt to override Governor Holden's veto of HB 1304," stated Dr. Edmond Cabbabe, president of the Missouri State Medical Association.

"As the medical professional liability insurance crisis continues to escalate, more and more physicians are abandoning high-risk practices such as obstetrics, neuro and trauma surgery, and leaving clinics and hospitals in plaintiffs' friendly court districts such as the cities of St. Louis and Kansas City. Many more physicians are retiring early because they cannot pass the sky-high premiums and other rising costs of doing business onto their patients. Other physicians have moved to states where meaningful legislation is enacted including a lower cap on non-economic damages and other reforms. The states of Indiana, Kansas, Wisconsin, and Texas are among those states," said Cabbabe.

"We do appreciate the bipartisan efforts of those in the legislatures who worked hard in the interest of their constituents in attempting to override the veto. They put the people of Missouri above politics in their attempt to deliver our state from this tremendous crisis," said Cabbabe.

The medical community will continue to seek a solution to the crisis through meaningful reforms.

House Bill 1304 was a compromise package of reforms modeled after a very successful law in California that stabilized the liability insurance market there and preserved access to quality care without denying legitimately injured

parties' entry to the courts and equitable compensation. It won support from both Missouri Democrats and Republicans, but was opposed vigorously by trial attorneys. A similar bill was passed last year only to be vetoed by Governor Holden.