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Mo. insurance director urges Congressional delegation to recognize states' strengths in industry regulation

Washington, D.C. – The state-based insurance regulatory system has been a constant in an otherwise erratic economic climate. That was the key message conveyed this week when Missouri's insurance director visited members of Congress to highlight one part of the nation's regulatory system that has consistently worked.

John M. Huff, director of the Missouri Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration, joined more than 35 state insurance commissioners for meetings with members of Congress to discuss insurance regulatory reform.

Some large insurance corporations, along with allies in Congress, are proposing to create a federal insurance regulator that would take away some state power to police the industry. Huff says while reform would be welcome, it must integrate and not displace the current state-based system of insurance regulation that has worked for 150 years.

The Congressional visits were designed to ensure that members of Congress carefully consider the way the nation's financial sector, including insurance, is regulated. Huff said as a whole, the business of insurance has not posed systemic risk to the nation's economy, instead providing a source of relative calm in an otherwise turbulent time. States examine insurance companies for solvency, and this oversight has kept insurance companies stable and protected policyholders from the worst of the financial meltdown.

“The state-based regulatory system is what allowed us to act on more than 26,000 inquiries and return nearly \$19 million to Missouri consumers in 2008,” Huff said. “As a state regulator, our department works every day to see that insurers honor their promises to policyholders in Missouri.”

The Washington trip was organized by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, an organization of the chief insurance regulators in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories.

[Director Huff's op-ed column, sent to Missouri newspapers, on this topic.](#)

About the Missouri Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions & Professional Registration

The Missouri Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration (DIFP) is responsible for consumer protection through the regulation of financial industries and professionals. The department's seven divisions work to maintain consumer confidence by examining and monitoring industries and professions and by establishing coherent and evolving policies. DIFP works to enforce state regulations both efficiently and effectively while encouraging a competitive environment for industries and professions to ensure consumers have access to quality products.