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September 24, 2010

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The Stouffer Report: *Passing Prop B Will Harm Rural Missouri*

For the past four weeks, I have written about the measures you will see on your November 2 ballot. The fifth and final question is one that could have been stopped from appearing on the ballot.

[Proposition B](#) is designed to crack down on illegal dog breeders. However, there is a lot more to this issue than meets the eye. In reality, it infringes on Missourians' right to raise animals. I will get into this in a moment. First, here is what you will see on your ballot:

Official Ballot Title:

Shall Missouri law be amended to:

- *require large-scale dog breeding operations to provide each dog under their care with sufficient food, clean water, housing and space; necessary veterinary care; regular exercise and adequate rest between breeding cycles;*
- *prohibit any breeder from having more than 50 breeding dogs for the purpose of selling their puppies as pets; and*
- *create a misdemeanor crime of "puppy mill cruelty" for any violations?*



It is estimated state governmental entities will incur costs of \$654,768 (on-going costs of \$521,356 and one-time costs of \$133,412). Some local governmental entities may experience costs related to enforcement activities and savings related to reduced animal care activities.

Fair Ballot Language:

A “yes” vote will amend Missouri law to require large-scale dog breeding operations to provide each dog under their care with sufficient food, clean water, housing and space; necessary veterinary care; regular exercise and adequate rest between breeding cycles. The amendment further prohibits any breeder from having more than 50 breeding dogs for the purpose of selling their puppies as pets. The amendment also creates a misdemeanor crime of “puppy mill cruelty” for any violations.

A “no” vote will not change the current Missouri law regarding dog breeders.

If passed, this measure will have no impact on taxes.

With the exception of the admitted costs — if passed — this sounds relatively harmless and maybe even like a good idea. I have written about this issue before. I handled [House Joint Resolution 86](#) in the Missouri Senate earlier this year. The proposal asked Missourians to vote on a ballot measure that would limit the creation of laws that keep folks from being able to raise animals. The resolution did not make it through the Senate.

The concern has been over puppy mills. For starters, there is no such legal term as “puppy mill.” This is a term that was invented by animal rights activists to define all dog breeders. There are standards animal breeders are asked to keep.

Those that do not maintain these standards are breaking the law. So, for folks to claim HJR 86 was useless because it would have done nothing to stop puppy mills were missing the point, which is that illegal dog breeding operations are already against the law. We need more enforcement.

I am watching this issue very closely. A lot of out-of-state money is coming in to get Proposition B passed. I am hopeful these efforts prove fruitless. Otherwise, a lot of folks will suffer from unnecessary laws that will do nothing more than harm their way of life.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

bstouffer@senate.mo.gov | www.senate.mo.gov/stouffer
State Capitol, Room 332, Jefferson City, MO 65101 | (866) 768-3987