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SENATORS ANNOUNCE PLANS TO CLOSE PENSION LOOPHOLE

JEFFERSON CITY – Today Sen. Delbert Scott (R-Lowry City) and Sen. Matt Bartle (R-Lee's Summit) announced plans to file legislation to close a loophole in state law that allows appointees to administrative law judge (ALJ) positions, such as the Labor and Industrial Relations Commission, to collect lucrative pensions for a little as one day's service. "This is simply not good government," said Sen. Bartle. "It is no wonder that the public is cynical of what goes on in Jefferson City. Giving out 'golden parachutes' to those people who are appointed to serve the public is the kind of thing that gives Missouri government a black eye."

Current law allows an ALJ with previous state service to receive a dramatic increase in pension benefit the day he or she is appointed. The legislation to be filed will require appointees to ALJ positions to accrue retirement benefits gradually based on their years of service, similar to other state employees. "The need for this legislation was highlighted by the governor's recent appointment of a person who served a mere two weeks on the Labor Commission and will collect an enhanced lifetime pension benefit totaling more than \$26,000 per year," said Sen. Scott, chairman of the Senate Pensions and General Laws Committee.

Under the Missouri Constitution appointees to certain ALJ positions made while the legislature is not in session must be confirmed by the State Senate within 30 days after it reconvenes in January. However, the loophole allows an appointee to keep this lucrative pension even if he is not confirmed by the Missouri Senate or resigns before the Senate can act. "The Missouri Senate has a constitutional duty to make sure that qualified individuals serve as administrative law judges in our state," said Scott. "Allowing appointees to serve a few weeks or a few months and then take their pension and run without ever coming under Senate scrutiny undercuts this important constitutional safeguard."