

For Immediate Release  
April 20, 2004

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**MISSOURI SENATE PASSES LEGISLATION PLACING  
OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY INTO STATE STATUTES**

JEFFERSON CITY -- The Office of Homeland Security is one step closer to being placed in the Missouri statutes as a result of legislation sponsored by Sen. John Griesheimer, R-Washington, which was passed Monday by the Missouri Senate.

Through an executive order, Gov. Bob Holden created the Missouri Office of Homeland Security on September 26, 2001. Missouri was the first state in the nation to create such an office after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

“It’s clear the threat of terrorism is not going away anytime soon,” said Griesheimer, who currently serves as chairman of the Joint Committee on Terrorism, Bioterrorism and Homeland Security. “Since our nation continues to be under a continual threat, it’s imperative that we make this office a part of Missouri’s statutes.”

Senate Bill 1171 codifies the Office of Homeland Security and the Missouri Security Council – which serves as the mechanism for coordination of homeland security-related activities between executive agencies and local political subdivisions – in statute. This was among the recommendations included in the 2003 annual report of the Joint committee on Terrorism, Bioterrorism and Homeland Security.

The office and the council will be discontinued 90 days after the dissolution of the federal Department of Homeland Security.

In addition, the name of the Joint Committee on Terrorism, Bioterrorism and Homeland Security will be changed to simply the Joint Committee on Homeland Security.

“I think that more accurately describes mission of the committee,” Griesheimer said. “The committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Office of Homeland Security.”

In addition, SB 1171 changes the committee's number of required meetings from one quarterly to one annually.

"It's difficult to schedule quarterly meetings when all of the members can attend," said Griesheimer. "An annual meeting work better for such a large committee. Of course, the committee will hold meetings at any time it becomes necessary."

Having been passed by the Missouri Senate, SB 1171 has now been sent to the House of Representatives for consideration.