

Sen. John Cauthorn's Combat Meth Act is Signed into Law in 18th District

Bill Works to Rid Missouri Communities of the Deadly Drug

In the 2005 legislative session, my colleagues and I in the Missouri General Assembly made further advances in the fight against methamphetamine in our communities. Meth producers now face major hurdles in obtaining key ingredients to cook the dangerous drug. Senate Bill 10, which I sponsored, requires some over-the-counter cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine, such as Sudafed, to only be purchased from pharmacists or registered technicians. Also under this bill, an individual cannot purchase more than nine grams of the medicine within 30 days.

All purchases will now be logged in a database available for police inspection. The legislation only includes pseudoephedrine-based products in the dry-tablet form because they are easier to grind and typically used in the meth-cooking process. Gel capsules and syrup elixir do not readily lend themselves to the production of meth and will continue to be available to the public without restrictions.

Other states, such as Oklahoma, that have enacted similar laws have witnessed a dramatic decrease in meth production. Some reports state that Oklahoma's law, the first to restrict access to pseudoephedrine products, has reduced meth production in the Sooner state by up to 80 percent in less than one year. Meanwhile, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas and Texas have also passed similar legislation. Now that Missouri has passed an anti-meth bill, we can join these states in the battle against this dangerous drug. This national epidemic requires a nationwide effort, and now Missouri can more effectively take part in that fight.

Less meth means fewer people becoming addicted to the drug and less harm to themselves, their families, and their neighbors. By limiting meth manufacturers access to these chemicals, we can work to counter an affliction that has crippled communities throughout Missouri. With these efforts, we can continue to make Missouri a better place.



Sen. Cauthorn (third from left), Rep. Bob Behnen (left) and law enforcement officials watch as Gov. Matt Blunt signs the Combat Meth Act into law in Hannibal.

Lawsuit Reform - Keeping Doctors in Rural Missouri

One of this year's greatest legislative accomplishments was a bill making much-needed reforms to Missouri's civil liability, or tort, laws.

This legislation will drive down health care costs for Missourians and ensure that our doctors and businesses are not driven out of the state due to high expenses from unfair legal procedures.

House Bill 393 prevents "venue shopping," a process allowing trials to be moved to jurisdictions that give higher-than-average jury awards. The bill also lowers caps on jury awards for punitive damages in medical malpractice cases.

By making civil liability lawsuit proceedings more reasonable, we can lower outrageously high medical malpractice insurance costs, which have been driving doctors out of our state.

As a result, highly skilled doctors will stay in rural Missouri and offer the services we need.



Sen. Cauthorn discusses health care issues during a visit to the Northeast Missouri Ambulatory Surgery Center.

This legislation also reforms Missouri's "joint and several liability" law, which can require some defendants to pay a greater percentage of the jury award than that for which they are liable. This bill protects liable defendants from having to pay more than their share if other defendants are unable to pay.

Unfair legal procedures such as these have taken a toll on Missouri. But the improvements we have made will stem the exodus of Missouri doctors and create a landscape more attractive to businesses.

We have made Missouri a better place to do business and practice and receive health care.

Missouri: Open for Business

Missouri's workers' compensation system has been in place for 80 years, and it is undoubtedly beneficial to both employers and employees as a way for workers to receive just compensation for work-related injuries. However, our system has been in need of revision for some time, and this year lawmakers were able to make those much-needed changes.

Senate Bill 1 tightens the definition of "work-related injury" to ensure that the Missouri workers' comp system only covers valid claims. The bill requires that work be "the prevailing factor," rather than a "substantial factor," in the injury.

The new law also reduces the amount workers can collect if they are injured while in violation of safety regulations. It also does not allow compensation for workers injured while traveling to or from work and for those who are injured while legally drunk on the job.

This new law will ensure that employees genuinely hurt in the workplace will be compensated and that employers will be able to rely on affordable workers' compensation coverage. My colleagues and I are fulfilling our pledge to make Missouri more business-friendly while protecting the rights of workers.

Promoting Missouri's Agricultural Value

Farmers establishing biodiesel plants will be eligible for new grants under the Missouri Qualified Biodiesel Incentive Fund that passed the Legislature this year. The legislation, which contains language I sponsored, received unanimous Senate approval and has been signed into law by Gov. Blunt.

Biodiesel producers will receive 30 cents per gallon for the first 15 million gallons produced. For the next 15 million gallons produced, they will receive 10 cents per gallon. The monthly grant is available for 60 months or until grant recipients have received the maximum allowable funding.

Biodiesel is a clean-burning alternative fuel produced from domestic, renewable resources and can be used in diesel engines with no major modifications. Biodiesel is biodegradable and nontoxic.

Mexico will be the home of the first biodiesel plant in Missouri. Nearly 30 million gallons of biodiesel will be produced each year at the site, which is expected to open in about a year. The facility is owned primarily by Mid-America Biofuels, a partnership of farmer-owned organizations.

To qualify as a facility that produces biodiesel under the Missouri Biodiesel Incentive Fund, the facility must be at least 51-percent owned by agricultural producers engaged in agricultural production for commercial purposes.

This legislation will stimulate biodiesel production in Missouri, help our environment by promoting a clean source of energy, add value to

our farmers' products and benefit our economy by reducing our dependence on foreign oil.



Sen. Cauthorn and Missouri Soybean Association CEO Dale Ludwig discuss the new biodiesel plant in Mexico, the first to be established in Missouri.

The Missouri Quality Jobs Act

This year the General Assembly passed legislation to attract more businesses and bring more jobs to Missouri. The bill offers incentives to businesses looking to come to or expand in our state, and it will significantly improve our business environment.

The Missouri Quality Jobs Program, created by Senate Bill 343, allows eligible businesses to keep a portion of the state withholding tax on wages paid for newly created jobs. To participate in the program,

businesses in rural areas are required to create at least 20 new jobs within two years, and those in urban areas must provide 40 new jobs within the same time period. Companies bringing in more than 100 new jobs qualify for additional benefits. The legislation also contains special benefits for technology companies.

Businesses and workers throughout Missouri will benefit from this program, as will our economy as a whole.

A Better Formula for Our Schools

A bill to distribute education funds more fairly was approved by the General Assembly this session. The legislation will fund school districts more equitably and guarantee that Missouri schools will spend enough on students to provide them an adequate education. Our new funding system will provide an additional annual \$830 million in K-12 funding, which will be phased in over seven years. That does not include the extra \$113 million slated for public schools in 2006.

Missouri is constitutionally required to fund public education. However, the formula used to determine how much money individual districts receive from the state is the subject of a lawsuit that has been filed by nearly half of Missouri's 524 school districts.

Lawmakers vowed to fix this flawed "foundation formula" and instituted a funding system that focuses on student need and the true cost of educating children in Missouri, whether in rural or urban districts.

Our current system allocates state money according to property values and taxes in each of Missouri's school districts. Because of the difference in property values between districts, wealthier districts have more to spend than do other ones. Per-pupil funding varies from \$5,000 to \$13,000 in Missouri districts.

Local wealth should not determine how much funding is available for schools. Every district should be able to adequately educate its students. Our new

system accounts for differing costs of education to adequately and equitably fund Missouri schools.

The new formula determines a minimum per-student dollar amount needed to provide an adequate education, a figure devised by studying the best-performing districts in the state. Further, the bill will guarantee that each Missouri district will receive at least that much to spend on students and will not

reduce state education funds in any Missouri district. Funding will be determined by student needs, not district tax rates.

Districts with 350 or fewer students also benefit from the new formula. What was once a \$5-million grant pool is now \$15 million in additional funds. Hold-harmless schools with fewer than 350

students will never lose funding, even if they see a drop in student enrollment. Districts with tax levies lower than that assumed in the new formula will still receive additional money created by the new system.

Ultimately, our state had a choice: do we continue throwing money into a broken funding system, or do we create a new formula based on student need? Our new funding system ensures education funding is based on what quality education costs, helps rural school districts and guarantees local control. Together, Missouri and its individual school districts have worked to see that all of our students receive the education needed to move our state forward.



Sen. John Cauthorn helps Missouri students develop better reading skills at an area elementary school media center.

The Budget: Living Within Our Means

Missouri's budget for the fiscal year that began July 1 of this year is an efficient and responsible spending plan. It fulfills the promise of members of the General Assembly to strike a balance between adequate school funding and proper state-sponsored health care for Missourians in need. The plan also provides for other vital interests of Missouri and its citizens, such as promoting business and jobs, without a tax increase.

This \$19.2-billion budget furthers our commitment to Missouri students and looks after the interests of our state's most vulnerable citizens. Leading the way in funding is the Department of Social Services and K-12 education.

In the budget for the current fiscal year, funds for public schools have increased by \$113 million with no cuts in higher education. Meanwhile, we have increased funding for the Department of Transportation by \$81 million and the Department of Agriculture by \$1.6 million. We will also spend \$70 million more on Medicaid than we did during the current fiscal year. Another \$16 million has been appropriated for the Veterans Commission Capital Improvement Trust Fund. All of these achievements were made without increasing taxes for our citizens.

We have drafted a spending plan that is efficient and appropriate for all Missourians.

Where Your Missouri Tax Dollars Go

FY 2006 Missouri Operating Appropriations

General Revenue \$7.159 Billion

Distribution of Each General Revenue Tax Dollar

FY 2006 After Veto Missouri Operating Appropriations
General Revenue: \$7.159 Billion



Stay In Touch With Senator John Cauthorn

To get in touch with me, simply call (573) 751-6858 or write to:

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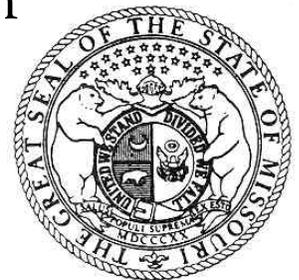
Log on to my Senate Web site: <http://www.senate.mo.gov/cauthorn>

To find out more about the Missouri Senate in general (legislation, legislators and more),

log on to: www.senate.mo.gov

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To use the legislative hotline, call toll free: (800) 877-5982.



Protecting Corrections Officers

While Missouri state prisons are growing at an unprecedented rate, state law protecting corrections officers has not kept pace. Fortunately, measures from a bill I sponsored in the 2005 legislative session have passed, and much-needed changes will be made to our prison system to benefit Missouri's corrections officers.

Under the new law, protections are available for corrections officers against prisoners who throw bodily fluids on the officers. These reckless assaults put the lives of our hardworking corrections officers at risk. They deserve better, and this legislation works to provide them safer, more secure working conditions.

The bill I sponsored makes it a Class C felony for any individual held in a correctional facility who is knowingly infected with HIV or Hepatitis B or C to intentionally cause another person to come into contact with any of his or her bodily fluids. This legislation is vital for protecting Missouri's corrections officers, who were previously defenseless against this sort of abuse.

The people who guard Missourians against our state's most dangerous criminals are subject to intolerable abuse. Our state correctional employees work hard to protect the citizens of Missouri. We should make the effort to ensure they are protected as well.



Sen. Cauthorn's legislation will protect corrections officers from abuses by prisoners.

Senator Cauthorn's 2005 Gubernatorial Appointments



Mark Wasinger, of Hannibal, is appointed to the Truman State University Board of Governors, which works to direct policy for the benefit of the university.



Dr. Toni Smith is appointed to the State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts and the Advisory Commission for Anesthesiologist Assistants.



Jeff Case is appointed to the Agriculture and Small Business Development Authority.

Other gubernatorial appointees sponsored by Sen. Cauthorn include **William Blades** of the State Fair Commission, **Linda Hickam-Fountain** of the Missouri State Veterinary Medical Board, **Barbara Pickering** of the State Lottery Commission, and **Gordon Spilker** of the Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority.

Keeping State Government Accountable

In 1976 Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's book "All the President's Men" was adapted to a movie. That same year the one-eighth cent sales tax for the Missouri Department of Conservation was approved. Since 1976 we have finally learned "Deep Throat" was W. Mark Felt. In the past 29 years, we have also seen the Conservation Department spend your tax dollars without one ounce of accountability.

Providing accountability to taxpayers is a fundamental aspect of democracy. All but one state agency receives appropriations voted on by the General Assembly and approved by the governor. The Department of Conservation is the lone exception.

That is why I sponsored Senate Joint Resolution 3, which requires the conservation sales tax to be put on the ballot every 10 years. Approved just once, in 1976, the eighth-cent sales tax provides a majority of the funding for the department. Currently, annual funding from the tax is \$93.5 million.

For an agency that doesn't have to justify annual funding from the Legislature, one public vote every 10 years is the least the department can do for taxpayer accountability. Unfortunately, however, there was not enough political will in the General Assembly to pass this vital piece of legislation. With the support of my constituents, I hope to pass this legislation in the future.

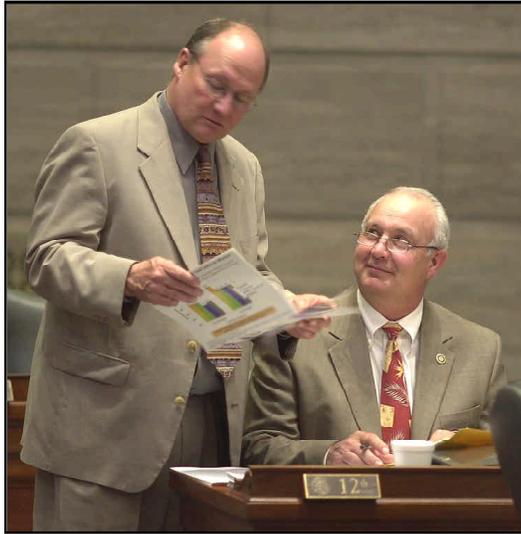
Currently, the department is sitting on a \$36 million balance. They literally have nearly 40 percent of their budget sitting, waiting to be spent. Meanwhile, Governor Blunt's new department heads in other agencies are aggressively finding places to cut waste, fraud and abuse.

Deer run rampant throughout the state and cause unnecessary automobile accidents. Farmers have seen crops damaged by excess wildlife. Yet the Conservation Department is slow to react. Voter accountability will make the department more responsive.

In 1978 the department collected more than \$24 million in tax revenue. In 2005 that number is projected to be \$97 million. The number of employees has doubled in that time span, and the department

has purchased numerous tracts of land, some costing as much as \$35,000 per acre. All of this is taking place while the state sits in tough budget times and is forced to scale back services.

One vote every 10 years will keep the Department of Conservation accountable for the tax money they spend and the actions they take. Our hunting and fishing programs will still prosper because federal law ensures license fees are used only for those activities. Although I was not able to pass this bill in 2005, I will continue to work with my colleagues to get this measure approved. We must ensure the accountability of our tax dollars.



Sen. Cauthorn's accountability legislation would put the conservation sales tax up to a vote every 10 years.

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Dept. of Labor & Industrial Relations - 3315 W. Truman Blvd., Jefferson City, MO 65109.....(573) 751-9691
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