



*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

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is the firmest friend of truth.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sen. Kevin Engler and Rep. Steve Tilley Advance Bill to Stop Prescription-Drug Sharing at Schools

JEFFERSON CITY – Last month the Partnership for a Drug-Free America released the results of a national study revealing that in 2004 teens were more likely to experiment with prescription drugs than illegal drugs like Ecstasy, cocaine, crack or LSD. “Ease of access” was cited as the predominant factor in teenagers trying prescription medications, with medicines readily available in their own homes and the homes of grandparents and friends.

Less than half of teenagers said they saw “great risk” in experimenting with prescription medications, as 18 percent reported abusing Vicodin and 10 percent have abused OxyContin, which are both prescription painkillers. Another 10 percent of young people reported trying the prescription stimulants Ritalin and/or Adderall, and 9 percent have abused over-the-counter cough medications like Robitussin.

Yesterday a bill sponsored by Sen. Kevin Engler, R-Farmington, and Rep. Steve Tilley, R-Perryville, preventing children from sharing prescription drugs at school cleared the General Assembly and now awaits the governor’s signature to become law.

Senate Bill 254 prohibits minors from distributing prescription medication on school property to any individual who does not have a valid prescription. The legislation also illegalizes possession of said medicine without a prescription.

“Prescriptions are prescriptions for a reason—they are prescribed by a medical expert to treat a specific condition for a specific person,” Engler said. “When other kids take non-prescribed medicine, they face potentially dangerous effects and could end up with a lethal health problem that may not be treatable with a prescribed bottle of pills.”

On first offenses under SB 254, any person under 21 years of age who distributes prescription medication to another minor without a prescription would be guilty of a Class B misdemeanor. A minor found in possession of prescription medication without a prescription would be charged with a Class C misdemeanor.

“Taking prescription drugs for reasons other than their intended purpose is detrimental and possibly life-threatening to our children,” Tilley said. “This law will squelch the temptation to share invalid prescription medicine and will give us a better chance of saving our children from the pitfalls of drug use and abuse.”

Juvenile officers and administrators in the Farmington School District noticed this problem rising in the past few years and brought their concerns to Engler and Tilley.

“There have been several students who have been hospitalized after taking these prescription medications,” said Jay Scruggs, a deputy juvenile officer. “Several juvenile officers from across the state has reported that this is a major problem in their jurisdiction and that legislation would be beneficial.”

Dr. David Waters, principal at the Farmington High School said, “Legislation addressing the problem of prescription pills being brought to schools by students will allow us to address a new area of drug problems we are facing as high school administrators in conjunction with local law enforcement.”

For further comment on the bill, please contact: Senator Kevin Engler @ 573-751-3455, Representative Steven Tilley @ 573-751-1488, Dr. David Waters @ 573-701-1316 x100 or Jay Scruggs @ 573-756-5766.