



*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senate's Early Action Advances Priorities to the Governor
Sweeping Workers' Compensation Reform and Litigation Reform Await Signature

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate has advanced two pieces of legislation, one reforming Missouri's civil justice system and the other providing for sweeping reforms of the state's workers' compensation system, to the governor. The measures, Senate Bill 1 and 130 along with House Bill 393, join a total of 18 bills and one resolution to be perfected by the Senate before the legislature's midterm mark. Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, said voters elected larger Republican majorities in the legislature to see change.

"We're enjoying early success," Gibbons said. "That's because we're dealing with the issues voters wanted us to reform such as the civil justice and workers' compensation systems."

Other priorities that have passed the Senate include:

- Senate Bill 10: Reduces meth production by limiting the amount of medications containing pseudoephedrine that customers can buy as well as requires those medications to be sold by a pharmacist or licensed technician from behind a counter.
- Senate Bill 202: Places all new administrative law judges and all new commissioner positions under the Missouri State Employees Retirement System ending sweetheart retirement deals.
- Senate Bill 539: Creates the Medicaid Reform Commission to review the current Medicaid system and make recommendations for a new, innovative healthcare delivery system by Jan. 1, 2006. It also moves vocational rehabilitation in-home services from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to the direction of Health and Senior Services, places eligibility limits on portions of the state's current Medicaid system, and incorporates the state's current Senior Rx program into the new federal prescription drug program beginning Jan. 1.

Gibbons says the swift work demonstrates a new philosophy adopted by the chamber.

"There's no need to be inadequately dealing with too many complex issues in the last week of session," Gibbons said. "We set out to address issues early and methodically this session and the entire body has been successful in avoiding delay and getting work done."

The legislature will resume work the last week in March when they return from spring break. Gibbons said rewriting the state's public school funding formula and passing a balanced budget on time will dominate the remaining half of session.

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