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The Cauthorn Mid-Session Report

JEFFERSON CITY, MO - Legislators are not in session this week as the General Assembly takes a spring break. Senator John Cauthorn (R-18) applauded the progress of the Missouri State Senate for passing bold legislation and progressing his legislative agenda.

“A lot has been accomplished in the first half of the legislative session,” said Cauthorn. “We have passed meaningful workers compensation and tort reform legislation and other measures beneficial to northeast Missouri. Our actions this session will create jobs, provide quality education, and keep government spending in check”

Here is a look at where Cauthorn’s legislation stands at the mid-session point:

Senate Bill 10 – Meth Eradication

Methamphetamine producers face major hurdles in obtaining key ingredients to cook the dangerous drug according to legislation passed by the Missouri Senate. Senate Bill 10 requires over-the-counter cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine such as Actifed and Sudafed could only be purchased from pharmacists or registered technicians. Also under this bill, an individual could not purchase more than nine grams of the medicine within a 30-day period.

All purchases would 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 will be free from the restrictions.

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Pseudoephedrine products may still be sold in all current outlets in liquid or liquid gel forms. These liquids do not readily lend themselves to the production of methamphetamine.

“Limiting access to meth cookers limits the plague of meth in our communities,” said Cauthorn. “Missouri can no longer be the number one meth producing state in the nation and we must stop the problem at its source.”

Similar legislation has passed in the House of Representatives.

Senate Bill 12 – Motorcycle Helmet Exemption

Motorcyclists 21 and older will be exempt from wearing a helmet when operating a motorcycle or motor tricycle according to Senate Bill 12. Currently 27 states do not have a mandatory helmet law.

“This issue boils down to personal freedom. If an adult wants to ride a motorcycle without a helmet so be it,” said Cauthorn.

Senators voted 6-2 in the Senate Transportation Committee to send the bill to the Senate floor where it will be debated.

Senate Bill 62 – Hand Fishing

Noodling, otherwise known as hand fishing, is a Southern Indian sport dating back to the 1700s where the participant pulls a fish out of the water with only bare hands. Cauthorn’s Senate Bill 62 would legalize the sport in all Missouri waters legal for hook and line fishing.

Noodling season would last during June and July. Catfish catches would be limited to five per season while there would be no limit for carp.

“There aren’t many noodlers in the state, but those that carry on this age-old tradition do so with strong passion,” said Cauthorn. “While I wouldn’t stick my hand in the water to grab a catfish I don’t believe government should tell somebody they can’t do it.”

The Senate Agriculture, Conservation, Parks and Natural Resources Committee has held a hearing on this bill.

Senate Bill 147 – Missouri Qualified Biodiesel Producer Incentive Fund

Missouri soybean farmers contributing to biodiesel production will be eligible for a grant under legislation approved by the Missouri Senate today. Senator John Cauthorn’s Missouri Biodiesel Producer Incentive Fund, Senate Bill 147, was passed by a 32-0 vote sending the bill to the House of Representatives.

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Farmers establishing biodiesel plants will be eligible for the grant. They will receive 30-cents per gallon for the first 15-million gallons of Biodiesel produced. For the next 15 million gallons produced they will receive ten-cents per gallon. The monthly grant is available for 60 months or until the fund is completely utilized.

“Our farmers right here in Missouri are providing us with the resources we need for the fuels of tomorrow, today,” said Cauthorn. “This incentive fund will put Missouri in the fast lane for producing renewable energies.”

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.

To qualify as a facility that produces biodiesel, the facility must be at least fifty-one percent owned by agricultural producers engaged in agricultural production for commercial purposes.

“Stimulating biodiesel production in our state will help our environment with a clean burning fuel, will help our farmers by adding value to their products, and will benefit our economy by reducing our dependence on foreign oil,” said Cauthorn.

Senate Bill 284 – Dairy Herd Revolving Fund

Dairy farmers will have an opportunity to receive a seven-year loan for the purchase of dairy cows under the program.

“Missouri’s dairy industry is in decline. Over the last 15 years we have lost half the number of dairy cows and have 70 percent fewer dairy farms,” said Cauthorn. “Providing this loan to farmers will help our local communities economically and will provide opportunities for our young farmers.”

Dairy farmers and agriculture experts testified on behalf of the legislation and how it will help their fellow farmers. Among them were Tim Echelmeier of the Missouri Dairy Association, Dr. Alan Wesler of the Missouri Dairy Growth Council, and Kenny Lenz of the Dairy Farmers of America.

The bill has been approved by committee and is awaiting Senate debate.

“This session, for the Senate and myself, is one of the best I have ever seen. The Senate has passed meaningful legislation and achieved many of our goals. My legislation is moving forward as well,” said Cauthorn. “Our families, our farms, our neighbors and our state will see benefits in jobs, education and the overall climate of our state.”

Sen. Cauthorn represents Missouri’s 18th Senate District. He can be reached at his capitol office at (573) 751-6850. You can also visit his web page by going to www.senate.mo.gov/cauthorn.