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Inmates Face Tougher Laws In Prison

Senate Approved Legislation Aims to Protect Corrections Employees

JEFFERSON CITY, MO - Prison inmates who endanger corrections employees will face tougher penalties under legislation approved today by the Missouri Senate. Senator John Cauthorn, who sponsored similar legislation in the Senate, handled House Bill 700 during floor debate. The bill now goes to the governor's desk for signature.

The bill is intended to protect corrections employees from dangerous diseases transmitted by bodily fluids. Any person held in a correctional facility knowingly infected with HIV, Hepatitis B, or Hepatitis C who intentionally causes another person to come in contact with bodily fluids is subject to class C felony.

"Our corrections employees literally put their lives on the line," said Cauthorn. "We must ensure they are protected by law so they can perform their jobs safely and securely."

Also included in the bill, offenders placed under the supervision of the Board of Probation and Parole will pay a monthly \$30 fee to the newly created Inmate Fund. These fees will be deposited into the state treasury and may be used for community corrections and intervention services for offenders.

The Board of Probation and Parole will assess each offender's ability to pay and can waive the fee permanently or temporarily for any offender. The fee will be waived if the offender is unemployed (until employment is found), permanently or temporarily disabled, or if the means test indicates the offender cannot afford the fee or mental health issues prevent employment.

"These funds will go toward helping pay for halfway houses, counseling and treatment," said Cauthorn. "This will help ensure offenders receive the rehabilitation necessary so they can become functioning members of society."

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.