

Senator Stouffer on the Name Change Legislation

The first all-nighter ended in the passing of Senate Bill 98, which renames Southwest Missouri State University as Missouri State University. We started debating this bill Monday late afternoon and the back and forth debate stretched into midmorning Tuesday. This fourteen hour process was one of the longest in senate history.

Several changes were made to this bill to lessen the negative impact it would have on the University of Missouri. Provisions were fastened on to the bill stipulating that SMSU will not receive additional funding based solely on the name change, and MU will also maintain its status as the state's primary research university.

Certain doctoral degree programs will not be allowed at SMSU with the name change. SMSU will be prohibited from seeking the land-grant and research designation held by the University of Missouri. The school would also not be allowed to offer any professional programs that duplicate those at the University of Missouri, such as training for doctors, lawyers and architects.

As the debate went on I refused to hold up the process, as many others senators preceded, there are bigger fish to fry than a pesky name change. Last year, senators debated the name change for 24 hours over five days. We need to be working on the foundation formula, tort reform, and looking at ways to fix and fund Medicaid not a university name change.

I believe with the amendments of this bill it still makes a third-tier in our state funded universities. The bill also does not solve the problem that Mizzou will lose its status, because it once went by Missouri State University. Regional schools' serve an

important purpose; they allow students of that area obtain a college degree, while staying close to home.

The bill will also change “college” with “university” in the names of Missouri Western in St. Joseph and Harris-Stowe in St. Louis, and drop the city designator from Missouri Southern State University-Joplin.

As amended, the legislation also would let the Board of Governors at Central Missouri State University choose whether to change the Warrensburg schools’ name to the University of Central Missouri.

If you have questions or comments on this issue or any other issue please feel free to contact my office toll free at 866-768-3987 or by email at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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