

Senator Bill Stouffer's Mid-Session Report

“We have a typewriter government in an Internet Age.” This is the key phrase the politicians are using this session. What has the General Assembly accomplished so far in session? What is still left to accomplish with around 30 days of this session left?

Workers' compensation has been reformed with SB 1 & 130 being sent to the governor. This bill redefines injuries qualifying for compensation as an injury where work is the prevailing factor instead of merely a substantial factor. The bill also creates equitable punishment for both employers and employees who cheat the system.

Tort reform, HB 393, was also sent to the governor. This legislation defines joint and several liability as any party found more than 51 percent responsible is expected to cover the costs of other parties found guilty if those parties are unable to pay the damages for some reason. It reestablishes the non-economic caps to \$350,000. Last, the legislation tightens venue shopping to only the county in which the injury occurred. Tort reform will keep doctors in Missouri by lowering their medical malpractice rates.

SB 98 changes SMSU to Missouri State University and a few more colleges' had their names submitted to be changed. These have been sent to the governor. Even with my vote against SB 98, the General Assembly still felt Southwest Missouri State University needed a name change.

The Senate debated SB 539, which reforms Medicaid. Medicaid has not been reformed since 1964. SB 539 creates new medical and social services that focus on providing the right care, at the right time, at the right place and at the right cost for those Missourians most in need. I understand many Missourians need Medicaid and the system

needs to be reformed; that is why I hope to be a part of the process to create a new program.

Other important legislation has been sent to the House including bills cracking down on Meth, retirement benefits and many other uncontroversial bills. The legislation to name the Lexington Bridge “Ike Skelton Bridge” also made its way to the House.

There are still many things left to accomplish before session lets out on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The legislature will be looking at a new education foundation formula. The budget has to be passed by May 6<sup>th</sup>. SB 32, concerning adult oriented businesses, has been perfected by the Senate but has not been third read and sent to the House. This legislation would tax and restrict adult oriented businesses. The Senate is also waiting to debate stem cell research.

If you have questions or comments on any legislation please feel free to contact me toll free at 866-768-3987 or by email at [bstouffer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov).