

*“Nothing is politically right
which is morally wrong.”*
– Daniel O’Connell



*“Free and fair discussion will ever be
found the firmest friend of truth.”*
– George Campbell

MISSOURI SENATE

Senator Bill Stouffer
District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
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Senator Stouffer: Protecting Missouri’s Children

Each year students by the busloads come to visit the capitol to see the legislature in action. During the tours, many students enjoy their day off from school. Most are oblivious to how the decisions being made may have a direct effect on their lives.

Underage Drinking: Four out of five Missouri high school students acknowledged having tried alcohol. Most minors know they can get away with drinking if they do not have an alcoholic beverage in their hand in the presence of law enforcement. Once the governor signs Senate Bill 402, a minor could get an MIP (minor in possession) if he or she has a blood alcohol content of .02 or is visibly drunk.

Schools will be required to create a policy detailing the consequences of any student found either possessing or drinking alcohol on or off school property.

Last, “house parties” are going to have tougher penalties. The measure prohibits adults from allowing minors to drink on their private property unless they are the minor’s legal guardian.

Drinking and Driving: Jessica Ellen Mann, in whose name the law will be enacted, was seven-years-old when she and her grandfather went to check the mail. While doing so, a driver with a blood alcohol content of .202 struck and killed them. The driver pled guilty and served a seven year maximum sentence for each account.

A new law will create aggravated vehicular manslaughter, a Class “A” felony. It would be punishable up to 30 years, or life in prison. Vehicular manslaughter would be considered if the person driving caused the death of any person that is not a passenger, caused the death of two or more people, or caused the death of any person while having a blood alcohol content of .20 or higher.

Protecting Children: Two pieces of legislation were passed to help protect the most innocent citizens of our state. The legislature put a stop to potentially harmful mercury in immunizations. Mercury has been used as a preservative in vaccines since the 1940s. Studies have indicated a possible correlation between exposure to mercury and cognitive development, resulting in learning disabilities, hyperactivity, and autism. The bill also mandates health insurance providers to cover mercury-free immunizations at the same cost of mercury-based immunizations.

The second piece of legislation makes sure sexual predators that prey on children will not get away with their crimes. It redefines the crime of sexual misconduct involving a minor in direct response to the Missouri Supreme Court overruling a case allowing a priest to be let go even though he exposed himself to boys in a bathroom at a school where he was a counselor. The bill also provides for lifetime electronic monitoring of some repeat sex offenders released from prison.

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

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