



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
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Senator Stouffer Gears Up for Special Session

Although I'm not the biggest proponent of extraordinary (or special) sessions of the Missouri General Assembly, my colleagues and I have a couple of excellent opportunities to improve the lives of Missourians the upcoming special session.

Senators will revisit language from legislation the Senate initially passed in 2005 but did not address again because House amendments distorted the original intent of the bill. The measure was Senate Bill 2, which allows lawsuits to be filed against people who help minors get abortions in other states. This bill enforces a Missouri law already on the books – the parental consent law, which requires anyone under age 18 to receive parental approval before getting an abortion. This measure will protect young women by allowing parents to be in on one of the most important decisions their children could ever make.

Senate Bill 2 also worked to ensure the safety of Missourians by requiring abortion clinics to have privileges to provide care at hospitals within 30 miles of the clinic. Lawmakers will introduce new legislation that contains these two provisions.

The Senate will also consider a resolution I have introduced that will urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers not to proceed with a planned “spring rise” of the Missouri River, which will threaten Missouri farmers with floods and drainage problems.

While my resolution and the abortion legislation will likely be the most hotly contested issues in the special session, there are several procedural measures for debate. The other issues for consideration:

- A provision in SB 420 that prohibits the posting of public officials' addresses and phone numbers on public agency Web sites has received disapproval by many public servants.

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- A drafting error in the workers' compensation bill (SB 1) inadvertently nullifies the entire workers' compensation system itself. Language in the bill exempting federal workers' comp law from the legislation also mistakenly exempts a Missouri statute that contains the entire set of circumstances the workers' comp system is in place to address. This mistake will be corrected.
- Three pieces of legislation creating new crimes for adults who allow minors to drink on their property had inconsistent language. Two of the bills charge adults who knowingly allow or fail to stop minors from "drinking or possessing alcohol" on their property, except when the minors are the adults' own children, are guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. However, a different Senate bill states these adults are guilty of a Class B misdemeanor when they allow minors to "consume" alcohol on their property. These differences will be remedied.
- Two pieces of legislation affecting the distribution of prescription drugs on school property have differing language. Senate Bill 254 prohibits the distribution of prescription medications by individuals younger than age 21 to individuals who do not have a prescription. House Bill 353 prohibits such distribution by those under age 18. Lawmakers will reconcile these differences with quality legislation.
- Conflicting language concerning drunk-driving laws also will be resolved. Senate Bill 37 and House Bill 972 list differing definitions of "aggravated offender." This conflicting language will be corrected.

These issues will have to be remedied with new legislation introduced in the General Assembly.

The next couple of weeks will be busy for my staff and me. Along with the special session, the Joint Interim Committee on a Missouri Health Care Stabilization Fund will meet Sept. 15, the same day the veto session begins. The committee, which I chair, is looking into ways to ensure reasonable medical malpractice coverage is available in Missouri.

If you have any questions regarding these or any other matters, or would like to receive these weekly reports electronically, please call our office toll free at (866) 768-3987 or e-mail bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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