



THE STOUFFER REPORT

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Special and Veto Sessions Successfully Conclude in Jefferson City

The 2005 special and veto sessions wrapped up recently with success at just about every level. After just two weeks, the General Assembly has passed important pro-life legislation and formally declared their opposition to a “spring rise” proposed by the federal government.

The House and Senate gave final approval to legislation allowing lawsuits to be filed against people who help minors cross the state line to receive abortions. Senate Bill 1 enforces Missouri’s parental consent law, which requires anyone under age 18 to receive parental approval before getting an abortion. SB 1 will ensure young people and their parents work together to make the best possible decision when the life of an unborn child is at stake.

SB 1 also requires abortion clinics to have privileges to provide obstetric and gynecological care at hospitals within 30 miles of the clinic. These measures will work together to protect our children, born and unborn.

Lawmakers also approved a resolution I sponsored declaring opposition to a planned “spring rise” of the Missouri River. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to release more water from a South Dakota dam during springtime in an attempt to increase reproduction among some species of birds and fish. However, downstream farmers have opposed the plan because of the increased risk of flooding. Commercial carriers and hydroelectric plants have also expressed concern because of the spring rise will result in low water levels in following seasons. I am very pleased my legislative colleagues have seen the danger this federal plan presents to real, hardworking people.

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A drafting error in workers' compensation legislation was also corrected by the General Assembly. The wording error would have put the workers' compensation system itself in jeopardy, but lawmakers worked hard to pass the legislation over the protests of some legislators. The General Assembly made the wording revision and ensured that Missouri workers will be covered.

Other legislation passed during the special session:

- A provision in legislation passed earlier this year that strictly prohibited the posting of public officials' addresses and phone numbers online has been modified. House Bill 3 forbids the posting of this information with the intent to cause bodily harm or death.
- Three pieces of legislation creating new crimes for adults who allow minors to drink on their property had inconsistent language and was corrected with House Bill 2.
- Two pieces of legislation prohibiting the distribution of prescription drugs on school property by minors had inconsistent legislation. HB 2 fixed the problem.
- Conflicting language concerning drunk-driving laws has also been resolved by HB 2.

Lawmakers also completed a veto session that began on Wednesday. The General Assembly considered two bills vetoed by the governor that would restrict the public's access to information about lobbyists. House Bills 524 and 525 would have repealed the requirement that lobbyists must report twice each year to the Missouri Ethics Commission what legislation they supported or opposed. Legislators chose to let the governor's vetoes stand.

It has been a pleasure to once again serve in Jefferson City. I would like to thank everyone in the 21st District for their kind words of support. I will see you back home.

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