



MISSOURI SENATE

Rob Mayer
25th Senate District

JEFFERSON CITY

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 331
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

A Weekly Column for the
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Contact: Irene Murray
(573) 751-3859

From Remedy to Ailment

Trying to sever the tie to Missouri's meth supply

JEFFERSON CITY – Cold and sinus medicines were created to help us, but there are individuals who have been manipulating these over-the-counter remedies to hurt themselves and others. Missouri lawmakers are doing what they can to ensure that intended cures are not turned into society's maladies. Last week the Senate Judiciary committee, of which I am vice-chairman, voted out of the committee a bill that would curb the production of methamphetamine, an extremely addictive drug that stimulates the central nervous system.

Senate Bill 10 would toughen restrictions on the sale of certain over-the-counter cold medicines such as Actifed, Sudafed and Nyquil because they contain pseudoephedrine, which is used to produce meth, (also known as "speed" or "crank.") Because these medications can be found on the shelves of practically every general merchandise store and service station in Missouri, it is not hard for meth makers to get their hands on large amounts of the drug's key ingredient.

In recent years, there has been a surge in meth manufacturing and abuse. This legislation that I have co-sponsored would combat this swelling problem by changing the law so that cold pills containing pseudoephedrine could only be purchased from pharmacists, and no more than nine grams of the medicine could be purchased within a 30-day period. So police could keep track of the purchases, consumers would have to allow their identities to be logged in a database. Those who have a genuine need

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for the legal medicine and no need to create the illegal drug will not care if their purchases are recorded.

According to the Missouri Department of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the prevalence of meth in our state has reached epidemic proportions. Oklahoma and Oregon currently have similar restrictions in place, and it is only logical that Missouri should follow suit. The fact that Missouri has been dubbed the meth capital of the US is not something that should make us proud, it should make us motivated.

The high number of meth-lab busts are filling Missouri's prisons with addicts and adding to the already high cost of incarceration. Because taking the drug is so addictive and making the drug is so profitable, meth cooks and users end up behind bars more than once. The dangers of meth seep beyond the individual who is producing or getting high on the drug. Meth is extremely explosive and causes many fires. Meth labs are not only in clandestine buildings in the middle of nowhere; they are in vehicles on our streets and in our neighbors' sheds.

A legislative move, introduced by Missouri's own U.S. Senator Jim Talent, has also been made on the federal level to regulate the sale of pseudoephedrine. With the federal and state governments working together to explore and enforce this avenue of meth-use prevention, we can aggressively clamp down on the supply of the ingredients needed to create meth. This effort is just a starting point to stop the do-it-yourself drug cooks from crafting large quantities of the brutally addictive illegal drug in your neighborhood.

Getting SB 10 passed is one of my legislative priorities this session. The full Senate body should be debating this bill sometime in the near future, and I will continue updating you on its progress.

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Senator Robert Mayer represents the people of Wayne, Ripley, Butler, Stoddard, New Madrid, Pemiscot and Dunklin counties in the Missouri Senate.