



## MISSOURI SENATE

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**A Column for the Week  
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# Preserving Values

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### *Senators fighting for family and tolerance in Missouri*

JEFFERSON CITY – With the session entering the home stretch, and with senators working harder than ever to pass legislation, there is no better time to ensure that our priorities are in order. We, as members of the Missouri General Assembly, must continue to honor the values of Missouri's citizens. Several pieces of legislation I am involved with will do just that.

Legislation I am co-sponsoring will help ensure that Missouri will protect its children from abuse. Senate Bill 551, which was heard this week by the Aging, Families, Mental and Public Health Committee, defines emergency situations for households whose children are at risk of violent or sexual abuse. By defining when we can step in to protect our children from mistreatment, we are sending a message that there is nothing of greater value to Missouri than our sons and daughters. We will not allow our children to be abused, and we will do everything in our power to ensure they are raised properly.

Another bill that I am co-sponsoring will help build a better Missouri in two ways. For one, it will help stem the development of our lawsuit-driven society while relieving the burden on our overloaded judicial system. Senate Bill 168, which passed the Senate this week, works to provide ways other than litigation to resolve disputes between homeowners and building contractors. The bill institutes methods of mediation to settle claims without having to resort to costly legal battles.

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Senate Bill 168 also includes a separate measure to remove prejudiced and insensitive language from documents involving thousands of households in Kansas City. Thousands of pages of homeowner association records prohibit blacks, Jews and other groups from owning or renting homes in Kansas City. While these documents have long since been ruled unenforceable by the U.S. Supreme Court and illegal by the U.S. Fair Housing Act, the language remains a relic of a dismal period in the history of our state and nation. This legislation will stand as yet another rejection of inequality and an embrace of tolerance by the people of Missouri.

Another bill pending approval by the Senate will save taxpayer dollars by removing restrictions on public works projects. Under Senate Bill 185, which I am also co-sponsoring, cities and counties will no longer have to award bids to contractors who have agreements with labor organizations. Public entities will not be required to spend more for public works simply because of a bidder's labor affiliation. These reforms will drive down the cost of public works for taxpayers and remove a burden from local and county governments. Once again, the Missouri Senate's commitment to the values and livelihoods of our communities takes precedence.

Furthermore, measures to improve education and reduce crime are continuing to move forward. The Senate Education Committee, of which I am a member, has passed a bill rewriting Missouri's education formula. Senate Bill 287 will fund Missouri schools more equitably by accounting for the different costs of living in Missouri school districts. Meanwhile, senators have discussed a bill to make it harder for methamphetamine producers to obtain the chemicals to make meth. I am co-sponsoring Senate Bill 10, which requires that over-the-counter cold medications containing pseudoephedrine be distributed by pharmacists or licensed technicians. These bills will help ensure that our communities will be able to grow through the education of our youth while remaining safe from the destructive effects of drugs.

All of these measures stand as a tribute to the values and principles of Missouri citizens. I am determined to continue my efforts to carry on these ideals.

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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.*