



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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Special Session Begins in Jefferson City

Abortion, workers' comp and Missouri River legislation lead debate, minor changes to legislation will also be made

JEFFERSON CITY – The 1st Extraordinary Session of the 93rd General Assembly began this week. Although I am wary of the need for special sessions and their associated costs, the 2005 special session allows the General Assembly to address several important measures.

Senators approved legislation this week that the Senate initially passed in 2005, but which ultimately failed due to misguided House amendments. This new piece of legislation, Senate Bill 1, works to implement key measures contained in the original bill that did not pass. SB1, which I co-sponsored, allows lawsuits to be filed against people who help minors get abortions in other states. The legislation 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. SB 1 will protect young women by allowing parents to take part in one of the most important decisions their children could ever make.

SB 1 also regulates providers by requiring abortion clinics to have privileges to provide care at hospitals within 30 miles of the clinic. Together, these provisions will work to improve the lives of Missourians and foster a culture of life in our state. This legislation was debated throughout the day on Thursday and passed that night.

While the abortion legislation is expected to be the most highly contested legislation in the special session, several other measures have been and will also be considered. Other issues up for debate:

- A concurrent resolution urging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers not to proceed with a planned “spring rise” of the Missouri River, which could threaten Missouri farmers with floods and drainage problems, has been approved by the Senate.

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- A drafting error in the workers' compensation bill that inadvertently nullified the workers' compensation system itself was corrected in an early morning vote Friday. Lawmakers stayed in session until 3 a.m. Friday morning to correct the error and ensure Missouri workers are covered.
- A provision that prohibits the posting of public officials' addresses and phone numbers on public agency Web sites has been negatively received by many public officials and 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, with 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 inconsistencies will be remedied with new legislation.
- 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. House Bill 2 essentially blocks that part from HB 353 and allows the language from SB 254 to be instituted.
- Conflicting language concerning drunk-driving laws also will be resolved. Senate Bill 37 and House Bill 972 list differing definitions of "aggravated offender." House Bill 2 resolves that difference with a finalized definition.

It is a pleasure to work for my constituents to make these needed reforms. I pledge that my colleagues and I will better the lives of all Missourians as efficiently as possible. Thank you all for your support.

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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.