



MISSOURI SENATE

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For Immediate Release:
June 29, 2005

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Sen. Jason Crowell To File Legislation Making Eminent Domain Laws More Equitable

JEFFERSON CITY—Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, announced today that he will be filing legislation revising eminent domain laws to protect private property owners. Crowell's revisions may include introducing a resolution allowing voters to amend Missouri's constitution. The announcement comes in response to the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling in *Kelo v. City of New London*.

Eminent domain laws allow governments to condemn and buy out private property for public use. The Fifth Amendment prohibits the government from taking private property except for public use, which has typically meant building bridges, highways or redistributing land.

However, the Supreme Court ruled last week that local governments may displace one property owner in favor of another private party in the name of overall economic development.

"The real issue here is the unclear definition of 'public use,' because now the Supreme Court has said that taking from the poor and giving to the rich can be considered 'public use,' if the rich generate more tax revenue," Crowell said. "This is a clear misuse of eminent domain laws."

Gov. Matt Blunt announced Monday that he is establishing a Missouri Task Force on Eminent Domain to review federal and state eminent domain laws to come up with criteria that state and local governments must meet before they shift property from private to public use.

"Eminent domain laws exist so that governments can fulfill a public need—improving infrastructure, such as constructing a highway, is the best example," Crowell said. "I look forward to working with the governor and the task force to come up with a fair, constitutional way to protect Missouri farm, home and business owners from being exploited by projects that lack a significant public need."

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