



Protecting Missouri Citizens

Anti-Methamphetamine and Sex Offender Registry Legislation Offers Protection to Missourians

Anti-Methamphetamine Legislation

This week the Senate signed off on a final version of legislation that will address the production of methamphetamine (meth) in Missouri. Cheaper and with longer-lasting effects than cocaine, the extremely addictive drug is a rapidly growing concern in Missouri. The spread of meth in Missouri has been explosive. In 1992, Missouri admitted five users into meth substance-abuse treatment for every 100,000 people in the state. But by 2002, Missouri's rate had multiplied more than 17 times over, to 85 per 100,000. According to the Missouri Department of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the prevalence of meth in our state has reached epidemic proportions. In some circles, Missouri is referred to as the meth capital of the United States.

The proliferation of meth use in Missouri brings with it concerns over violence associated with drug trafficking, health consequences of needle use and neonatal exposure, and neuro and environmental toxicity issues. The cost to the community is staggering: for every pound of meth produced, 5 to 7 pounds of toxic waste must be disposed of by a Department of Natural Resources contractor at an average cost to taxpayers of \$150,000. The cost of incarceration is also high; because the drug is addictive and selling the drug is lucrative, criminal offenders end up behind bars repeatedly. Furthermore, processing meth is extremely dangerous. Ignitable, corrosive, reactive, and toxic chemicals can cause explosions, fires, toxic fumes, and damage to health and environment.

The key ingredient in methamphetamine is ephedrine, a controlled substance. Because it is difficult to obtain ephedrine, drug dealers use pseudoephedrine found in many over-the-counter medications used to treat cold and sinus problems. Senate Bill 10, which is on its way to the governor, would toughen restrictions on the sale of these over-the-counter medicines. The legislation changes the law so medicine containing pseudoephedrine in the tablet form (not liquid or gel capsules) can only be purchased from pharmacists, and no more than nine grams of the medicine can be bought within a 30-day period.

Consumers' identities will be logged in a database, which the police can access. Oklahoma and Oregon currently have similar restrictions in place, and it is only logical that Missouri should follow suit.

U.S. Senator Jim Talent introduced legislation on the federal level to regulate the sale of pseudoephedrine. The combined efforts of federal and state governments to enforce this avenue of meth-use prevention will make meth more difficult to manufacture and prevent many do-it-yourself meth cooks from crafting large quantities of the drug.

Sex Offender Registry Legislation

Another bill that offers protection to Missourians received unanimous final passage by both chambers of the General Assembly this week. Current law allows state highway patrols to publish the names, last-known addresses and criminal convictions of sex offenders on its Registered Sex Offender Website. Senate Bill 73 gives explicit consent to county sheriffs to also post pictures of sex offenders on the website. The reason for the legislation stemmed from legal confusion regarding whether photos of sex offenders should be considered public record. According to Missouri's current Sunshine Law, photos—in addition to fingerprints and statements—are exempt from public records. Since sex offenders tend to be repeat offenders, legislators agreed that making photos of sex offenders available to the public was an effective way to prevent a repeat incidence of sexual abuse.

ALJ Pensions

One of my own bills was officially signed into law this week. SB 202 prevents administrative law judges (ALJ) and commissioners from receiving special treatment in the form of overly large retirement pensions. The law goes well with the goal of this budgetary season, which is to eradicate waste, fraud and abuse from state spending.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: jcrowell@senate.mo.gov or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>.

Thank you for your time.

Senator Jason Crowell represents the people of Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry and Scott counties in the Missouri Senate.