



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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Jason Crowell
27th Senate District

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Sen. Crowell Proposes Legislation Insuring Education Benefits to National Guard Members

JEFFERSON CITY— Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, has pre-filed legislation enabling Missouri Army National Guard members to fully utilize the Guard's education assistance program.

In exchange for service to the National Guard, Missouri helps members pay for their higher education. Current law requires members to remain in the National Guard for three years from the last semester that they received tuition assistance. However, when Guard members are deployed, they are unable to enroll in classes and utilize tuition assistance.

"The three-year rule penalizes Guard members who bravely defend our country around the world," Crowell said. "These young men and women signed up for the Guard with the understanding that the state would help pay for college, and I'm not going to turn my back on this commitment based on a technicality."

The issue was brought to Crowell's attention by Jerry Neels whose son Bradley is a member of the Missouri National Guard. Bradley made an eight-year commitment to the Guard and planned to use tuition assistance during his first five years in the Guard. Bradley was deployed to Kosovo in 2003 for a year and a half, shrinking his window for tuition assistance from five years to three and a half years.

"My legislation allows people like Bradley Neels to deduct time deployed from the three-year rule, thereby extending the window in which Guard members can receive tuition," Crowell said.

The legislation will apply to any individual called to active duty, on or after September 11, 2001. The Second Regular Session of the 93rd General Assembly convenes Jan. 4, 2006.

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