



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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A Weekly Column for the  
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# Legislation Would Reform State Election Process

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JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate stood adjourned on Martin Luther King Day to observe the holiday honoring the civil rights leader and his accomplishments. The Senate had traditionally worked through all recognized state holidays in order to complete the business of the people by the Constitutional deadline of mid-May. This year is the third consecutive year in which the Senate suspended operations on the day commemorating Dr. King.

Senators began the shortened legislative week introducing a number of bills ranging in intent from revising business tax policy to addressing animal feeding operations. Once bills are introduced, they are referred to the Senate committee whose title most closely matches the bill's purpose. Bills in committee are often given public hearings to enlist the thoughts, comments and suggestions offered by people outside the capitol.

As chairman of the Financial, Governmental Organizations and Elections Committee, I was proud to join Governor Matt Blunt this week in introducing proposals to reform our elections process to increase access to the ballot.

One proposal would amend Missouri's election code by allowing no fault absentee balloting. Any voter who expects to be prevented from going to the polls for any reason may vote by absentee ballot under this provision.

Another important change to our election laws would remove the requirement that absentee ballot statements be notarized, a requirement that is unique to Missouri. I believe the reliability and trustworthiness of absentee ballots can be adequately safeguarded through a signature verification process.

Other efforts to increase voter access to the polls include a measure to help voters find their correct polling places, a proposal to prohibit a person from knowingly destroying, defacing or concealing the voter registration application of another person, and a provision requiring people who accept voter registration applications for others to deliver those applications to the election authority within seven days of accepting the applications.

In 2002, we passed substantial election reforms which have helped restore public confidence in our election process as evidenced by record voter turnouts in August and November of 2004. These additional measures, if approved, will continue our efforts to increase voter access to the polls and ensure every vote counts.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: [delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us](mailto:delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us)

*Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.*