



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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A Weekly Column for the  
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# Eye Exams For Every Child

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JEFFERSON CITY – This week I was joined by House Speaker Rod Jetton, R-Marble Hill, and representatives from a number of health and educational organizations to introduce legislation to provide eye examinations for all Missouri schoolchildren.

This important legislation would require every child enrolled in kindergarten, first grade or a Head Start program to receive at least one comprehensive eye examination by a state licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist, beginning July 1, 2006.

The goal of the Childcare Vision Act is to ensure detection of any eye disease or disorder at a more treatable age. It presents an opportunity to correct many vision problems in order to prevent a student from getting a bad start in school due to poor eyesight.

I am among those with a permanent vision disability, which is why I have had to wear glasses since I was about 16 years old. My ophthalmologist told me in recent years that if I would have had treatment for "lazy eye" at an early age, the nerve degeneration would not have happened.

The legislation also establishes channels for those who cannot afford an eye exam to receive assistance.

The bill would require the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Health and Senior Services to compile and maintain a list of health professionals who could provide eye examinations or vision correction on a free or reduced cost basis.

It's our goal to identify these kids at an early age and get them to where they are not held back, while preventing eye damage as they grow up. I'm delighted all of these groups are working together with us to ensure Missouri children can clearly see their futures.

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.*