



NEWS RELEASE

State Senator Gary Nodler
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Sen. Gary Nodler's Alcohol Crimes Bill Receives Final Approval From Senate

JEFFERSON CITY—Legislation sponsored by Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, that modifies the laws pertaining to alcohol-related offenses has been sent to the House today after receiving final passage from the Senate.

Senate Bill 37 creates a gradation of penalties for drunk drivers who cause a fatality, increases consequences for repetitive offenders and strengthens the laws against underage drinking. "Jessica's Law" was inspired by the tragic deaths of 7-year-old Jessica Mann and her grandfather, James Dodson, who were checking the mailbox outside of Dodson's home when a drunk driver struck and killed them.

"The devastating effects of drunk driving and other alcohol-related crimes ruin the lives of many innocent victims each year in Missouri," Nodler said. "This legislation upholds justice by enabling the courts to properly punish drunk drivers whose carelessness results in a tragic loss of life."

Among the various provisions of Nodler's bill, penalties for involuntary manslaughter in the first degree are increased to a class B felony if a driver has a blood alcohol content (BAC) between .08 and .18 and causes the death of any person who is not a passenger or causes the deaths of two or more people. If the driver's BAC is between .18 and .24 when he or she causes the death of *anyone*, he or she will be guilty of a class B felony. Furthermore, it will be deemed a Class A felony when a driver with a BAC of at least .24 (three times the legal limit) causes the death of anyone. All defendants in these cases must serve at least 85 percent of their sentence before parole consideration.

Upon approval from the House, the bill will head to the governor to be signed into law.

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