



Pre-filing Begun on Measures Impacting No Call Law, Missing Persons and Insurance Investments

JEFFERSON CITY — As lawmakers prepare to return to the Capitol for the coming session, many are pre-filing bills to get a jump start on the legislative process. To ensure I am properly representing my constituents, I have pre-filed several measures that I will work hard to pass in 2007. Included in the legislation are bills to include automated phone calls on the state No Call list and modify laws relating to missing persons and insurance investments.

Missouri's No Call law protects Missourians from annoying, unwanted telemarketing calls. However, the state law does not include automated phone calls, or "robocalls," which are often used for political ads. During the recent election cycle, many Missourians complained that they had received multiple politically oriented robocalls, as many as eight in a single evening.

To combat these unsolicited phone calls, I have pre-filed a bill to include automated calls in the state No Call law and require the calls to identify who has paid for them. Senate Bill 65 makes certain exemptions to the ban on automated phone calls to No Call participants, such as calls citizens have given permission to receive, those relating to a recent or current business or personal relationship, and calls preceded by a live person who obtains consent to play the automated message. In addition, SB 65 requires political phone calls to include a "paid for by" statement that identifies who funded the message. Violators may be subject to civil penalties of up to \$5,000 per violation. Although First Amendment protections prohibit outright bans on all political phone calls, the No Call law does allow us to place restrictions on automated calls for the benefit of Missourians.

I have also filed legislation allowing the Missouri Department of Public Safety to establish rules for missing persons who may be in particular danger. SB 67 allows the department to issue "missing endangered person" advisories, which would apply to missing persons who are mentally or physically disabled and are dependent on others, missing under circumstances that indicate they are in danger, or missing for involuntary or unknown reasons. Missouri needs to do all it can to ensure that missing persons, particularly those who are less able to care for themselves, are brought home as quickly and safely as possible.

Another measure I have pre-filed for next year, SB 66, makes various modifications to Missouri law concerning insurance investments. The legislation works to prevent conflicts of interest in insurance investments and streamline the investment process in order to benefit consumers.

These important measures represent just a sample of the bills I am introducing in the Missouri Senate. I am looking forward to the start of the 2007 session on Jan. 3, when we can begin working to pass this and other needed legislation.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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