



THE LOUDON TIMES

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Enabling Veteran Respect,

Having quickly sent to the governor legislation providing significant additional funding for the state's home heating cost assistance program last week, the Senate this week moved with equal speed and unanimity in passing legislation protecting Missourians' rights to a peaceful and respectable funeral. Senate Bill 578 prohibits picketing and protesting of funeral services from one hour before the funeral service to one hour after the service. Impetus behind this bill stems from a vocal and unruly crowd of protesters who willfully disrupted the funeral services of a Missouri native and US Army specialist killed last summer in Iraq. The heroic men and women wearing the uniforms of our nation's military are defending abroad the very rights of free speech and assembly we enjoy here at home. The friends and family of those tragically killed in the line of duty deserve to be spared from these disgraceful and inappropriate displays of irreverence. SB 578 received unanimous approval in the Senate and has been referred to the House of Representatives, where similar support is expected.



Assisting Veterans' Families,

On a related note, James Mueller, Commander in Chief for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, spoke this week from the dais of the House of Representatives, urging lawmakers to consider enacting measures like the ones I outlined last week. Mr. Mueller's address drew an impressive crowd of fellow veterans to the capitol, which gave my legislative colleagues and me a welcome opportunity to talk with those who have put their lives on the line so that we may continue to live safely in freedom.

The legislation I drafted providing scholarships to the spouses and children of military veterans from Missouri who were killed in the line of duty advanced this week. Senate Bill 876 was heard by the Senate's Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws Committee. The measure allows children and spouses of Missourians who have been killed or are 80 percent disabled due to military service after September 11, 2001, to receive an educational grant for tuition at any Missouri institution of higher education. The measure also provides grants for \$500 worth of books per semester and up to \$2,000 per semester for room and board.

Often the sacrifices of Missouri's military families are overlooked. Their support, courage and endurance is no less important in the never-ending defense of our way of life. When a family loses a member to the horrors of warfare, the survivors deserve our admiration and assistance. This legislation supports these families and also serves as an investment in our collective future. Committee approval of this measure will move the tuition program to the full Senate.

Protecting Property Rights



Gov. Blunt speaking at the Eminent Domain Reform Rally.

Throng of lawmakers, local officials and property owners gathered in the capitol rotunda this week to participate in a rally supporting the enactment of measures restraining the use of eminent domain. Exercised properly, the constitutional power of converting land use through eminent domain has improved communities throughout Missouri and across the nation. Used improperly, eminent domain-driven development can trample the rights of businesses, homes and landowners. Recent court decisions have identified a need for stronger checks-and-balances in land development law. Several legislative initiatives are now advancing in the Missouri Legislature that are designed to ensure eminent domain proceedings carefully balance the established rights of private property owners with the purported merits of a new use for their land.

I will continue to keep you apprised of the status of these measures and on other issues as the legislative session progresses. If you have questions or comments about these issues or any other topic, please call my Capitol office at (573) 751-9763. Thank you for your support.

Quote of the Week

“We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we will always be free.”

Ronald Reagan