



THE LOUDON TIMES

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Senators Debate Several Key Measures

Senators stayed busy this week, working to advance a number of important bills. Legislation protecting the integrity of our voting system and modifying cable service regulations were debated this week. But perhaps most rewarding was the Senate's approval of legislation implementing stricter penalties against sexual predators.

Voter fraud is dangerous to our system of government. It devalues votes that are legitimately cast, which is the foundation of our rights as citizens of a representative democracy. The Voter Protection Act, detailed in Senate Bill 1014, cracks down on fraud by requiring Missourians to show their driver's licenses or other government-issued photo identification in order to vote. Under the bill, voters' photo IDs are then matched to their registration records, and Missouri is required to issue free voter IDs to Missourians who cannot obtain a driver's license. The legislation also works to reduce voter intimidation by increasing the distance that must be kept from the voting booth by those distributing campaign literature, posting signs or polling voters. These simple steps will protect the right of all Missourians to vote in fair and honest elections.



Senator Loudon with visiting fourth graders from Westridge School.

Lawmakers also debated a controversial measure aiming to increase competition among phone and cable companies. SB 816 makes it less difficult for phone companies to break into the cable business. Under the legislation, phone companies no longer have to make individual agreements with each of Missouri's cable franchise areas in order to offer them cable service. Instead, phone companies can apply for state-issued franchise licenses allowing them to enter multiple markets. There is much debate about whether the measure will result in better prices for consumers because of greater competition or allow phone companies to cherry pick the most profitable markets and leave others behind. While I will continue to examine all details of this legislation, I promise to cast my vote in the best interests of the people of 7th District and our state as a whole.

Senate Passes Sex Crimes Bill

I was very satisfied this week when the Senate approved what has been a top priority for me all year, legislation imposing harsher penalties on sex offenders who prey on children. Senate Bill 588, which was combined with sex-offender legislation I introduced this year, requires lifetime supervision and electronic monitoring of those who have committed the worst sex crimes. Among other provisions, it also enhances penalties against those who lure children over the Internet,

establishes a toll-free hotline to report sexual abuse and allows probation and parole officers to have access to registered sex offenders' personal computers to look for evidence of child pornography.

Current laws against these heinous sexual offenders are too lenient, leaving our children vulnerable to their cruel motives. Senate Bill 588 offers greater protections to our children while imposing stricter penalties to send a message to these criminals that Missourians are serious about sexual abuse.

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

“All Great things are simple, and many can be expressed in single words: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope.”

Sir Winston Churchill