



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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Sen. Bartle Responds to Decision Striking Law Banning Billboards for Adult Businesses

JEFFERSON CITY – On Monday a panel of the 8th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in St. Louis handed down a decision stating that Missouri’s new law banning billboards for smut shops and other adult businesses is unconstitutional. The court’s ruling stated that the law’s effect was overly broad and that in order to meet constitutional muster it must be more specifically targeted. Sen. Matt Bartle, R-Lee’s Summit, who sponsored the legislation creating the billboard law, today announced he will file a new bill to meet the court’s standard.

“I am encouraged because the court gave us guidance on what needs to be fixed with the current law,” Bartle said. “I’m going to come back with legislation to streamline this law. This will be the first bill I file, and I will do so on December 1st.”

Dec. 1 is the first day legislators are allowed to file legislation for the 2007 session.

In 2004, Sen. Bartle sponsored SB 870, which banned all sexually oriented businesses from advertising within one mile of a state highway. The law allowed adult businesses to have two signs to only display basic information, such as hours of operation.

“Our communities did not ask for a fight with the pornography industry,” Bartle said. “It is the pornographers who continue their aggressive expansion with no regard for the erosion of societal values they inevitably cause. The courts have repeatedly stated that laws can be passed that are not contrary to the First Amendment, and we will do just that.”

“There was a time when families could travel down Missouri highways without fearing that their children would be exposed to lurid and suggestive advertising, but those days have come and gone,” Bartle added. “We will respond with effective and meaningful regulation of an industry that refuses to police itself. Missouri may be the land of the pioneers, but we will send the message that it is no longer the ‘Wild West.’”

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