



# SENATOR MATT BARTLE

District 8 – Capitol Building, Room 431 Jefferson City, MO 65101

Column for Week of:  
July 24, 2006

Contact: Todd Scott  
(573) 751-1464 / (888) 711-9278

## Anti-Pornography Legislation Improves Missouri's Landscape

Over the course of my legislative career, I have worked to limit the encroachment of the pornography industry on our public landscape. Missouri families cannot travel down our state's highways without being exposed to lurid and suggestive advertising for adult cabarets and "smut shops." In the past several years, the Legislature has passed legislation I have sponsored to clean up Missouri highways and implement common-sense restrictions on these harmful businesses.

In 2004, in response to the proliferation of billboards for "smut shops" along Interstate 70 and Hwy. 50, the Legislature approved legislation I sponsored cracking down on these unwanted advertisements. Senate Bill 870 will help improve Missouri's landscape by banning off-premises billboards for adult businesses within one mile of any state highway.

In order to help the bill withstand the inevitable constitutional challenges by the pornography industry, a three-year phase-in period was included in the law. It is currently illegal to put up new billboards for "smut shops," and existing billboards must be removed by August 2007.

Lawmakers furthered this commitment to Missouri families in 2005 by passing provisions from legislation I sponsored. The legislation bans anyone under the age of 21 from entering an adult business, requires a reasonable distance be kept between performers and patrons, prohibits total nudity and prevents "megaplexes," where multiple adult businesses congregate under the same roof.

As expected, the pornography industry sued the state of Missouri soon after these two bills were signed into law. Here's an update on the ongoing legal battle to enforce these laws:

- **Billboards Ban Law:** In spite of multiple lawsuits, the federal court has upheld the constitutionality of this law. The "smut shop" owners have appealed the case to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals.

- **Adult Cabaret Law:** Last summer a lower court sided with adult-business owners and struck down this new law. The state of Missouri is appealing the decision.

Pornographers continue their aggressive expansion with no regard for the erosion of societal values they inevitably bring, but I will not back down in this ongoing fight with the pornography industry.

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 e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.mo.gov](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov) or by phone at (888) 711-9278.

-END-