



MISSOURI SENATE  
JEFFERSON CITY

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## Senators Introduce Legislation Urging Motorists to “Move Over”

JEFFERSON CITY—Sen. President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, and Sen. Norma Champion, R-Springfield, today introduced two measures encouraging motorists to be more cautious on Missouri highways.

Senate Bill 872, which is sponsored by Gibbons, stiffens penalties for drivers who fail to properly slow down and move over to the left lane when they approach emergency responders on Missouri's roads and highways. The bill increases the penalty from a Class B misdemeanor to a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail or a maximum fine of \$1,000.

Gibbons says he drafted the bill because four highway patrol officers have been killed while working traffic in the past four years.

“We want drivers to help keep officers and emergency responders safe and alive by slowing down, staying alert, and moving over when they see emergency lights on the road,” Gibbons said. “But when drivers aren't paying attention and ignore the law by speeding by emergency scenes and putting lives in danger, they should face a tougher penalty.”

Champion's Senate Concurrent Resolution 22 directs the Missouri Department of Transportation to create individual highway signs encouraging drivers to “move over.” The resolution also requests that these signs display the name and date of highway workers, emergency workers and highway patrol officers injured or killed on Missouri highways. The signs would then be placed at the locations the injuries or deaths occurred.

“To do their jobs, highway workers, law enforcement officers and emergency services personnel must work in close proximity to traffic,” Champion said. “It only takes one careless driver to put the lives of these workers on the line. We must do as much as possible to urge motorists to do what they can to save lives.”

Champion said that not enough motorists follow Missouri law requiring them to move over one lane or slow down when approaching emergency vehicles parked on or along-side highways.

Between 1999 and 2003, there were nearly 6,000 injuries and 97 deaths that occurred in Missouri highway work-zone crashes. Three MoDOT employees were killed and 69 were injured in work zones in 2004, and in the past five years alone, seven Missouri highway patrolmen were killed alongside state highways.

“What is so sad is that these injuries and deaths were preventable,” Champion said. “Signs in place where these tragedies happened will serve as a sobering reminder of what happens when motorists do not drive with the utmost care and caution.”

Before any signs are created, the resolution further requests that MoDOT obtain permission from the immediate family members of the highway workers, emergency workers, or highway patrol officers whose names would be displayed.

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