



*Nothing is politically right  
that is morally wrong.*

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JEFFERSON CITY

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is the firmest friend of truth.*

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Senate Votes for Bill to Enhance Safety on Missouri's Highways**

### ***Bill Stiffens Penalties for Reckless Drivers Who Endanger Lives***

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JEFFERSON CITY, MO. – The Missouri Senate gave first round approval to a comprehensive highway safety bill today that will stiffen penalties for drivers who fail to move over for emergency vehicles, commit offenses in a highway work zone, or injure or kill someone because they fail to yield. The Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 872 combines the “Move Over” legislation of Senate Bill 872, sponsored by Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, with Senate Bill 754, sponsored by Sen. Delbert Scott, R-Lowry City, and Senate Bill 669, sponsored by Sen. Chris Koster, R-Harrisonville.

The bill stiffens penalties for drivers who fail to move over and slow down when they approach emergency responders on Missouri's roads and highways by increasing 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 legislation because four highway patrol officers have been killed while working traffic in the past four years.

“Highway patrolmen and emergency responders work everyday to save lives. We need to do what we can to save theirs,” Gibbons said. “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. But when drivers are careless and ignore the law by speeding through emergency scenes, they put lives in danger and should face a tougher penalty.”

Also included in the bill is legislation pertaining to highway work zone safety. Scott says the measure increases a number of penalties for people who drive recklessly or endanger the life of highway workers while driving through a work zone.

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Farah Fite, Senate Majority Caucus Communications Director  
(573) 751-1562  
ffite@senate.mo.gov

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.

“Crashes in work zones are causing too many deaths and injuries of Missouri workers who are simply doing their job trying to make our roads better and safer,” Scott said. “There is no excuse for not slowing down in construction work zones that are clearly marked, many times miles in advance. That is why we must make a concentrated effort to get drivers to slow down.”

The third segment of the bill is known as Clutch’s Law. It would create additional fines and even suspend a person’s driver’s license if they injure or kill someone by failing to yield the right-of-way at an intersection.

Koster emphasized the importance of a comprehensive highway safety bill that will make Missouri’s highways safer for everyone.

“Nearly 5,000 people a year are injured or killed in failure to yield accidents,” Koster said. “This bill is an important part in reducing auto accidents, and making Missouri’s roads safer for our families and loved ones.”

The bill needs final approval from the Senate before advancing to the House of Representatives for similar consideration.

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