



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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# Many Bills Affecting Rural Missouri Advancing in Senate

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JEFFERSON CITY – The State Senate is moving forward with lots of activity. Bill filing has now come to an end. March 1 was the deadline for the filing of new legislation in bill form. I say bill form to emphasize the fact that lots of legislation will be altered or changed through the amendment process. Some bills will be changed in committees, while other changes will occur on the Senate floor.

### **Issues of Interest to Those in Rural Missouri**

The Senate has taken up the issue of strengthening sentencing guidelines and mandating time served for sexual offenders. These horrendous acts should have punishment standards that are not bendable.

Eminent domain seems to be starting its journey through the Legislature. I am surprised the amount of the time that it has taken to start the process. I am concerned with the provisions that the bill has in it. The hall talk seems to be that a very watered-down version of the personal property protection bill will be presented. I am closely watching what may come from this bill and I'm working to strengthen personal property protections.

The 10-percent ethanol mandate is another issue to be addressed in the near future. Right now there is an extremely strong lobbying effort to try and muddy the waters on why ethanol shouldn't be mandated and why petroleum products are superior. I don't buy it! Fuel prices presently are exceedingly high. Why? Because they can charge it. If this wasn't the case then why is diesel, a less refined fuel, more expensive than gasoline?

Ethanol has a multitude of benefits to Missourians: rural economic development in the building of ethanol plants, price increases to local farmers for their corn, and an expanded work force. The price of ethanol is currently less than petroleum; unfortunately, that price isn't being passed along.

Ethanol is environmentally friendly because it does not contain the MTBE, a carcinogen, and it has a higher octane rating than petroleum. And ethanol is the start in our reduction dependency on foreign oil.

The supplemental budget passed this week in the Senate. This is the amount of money needed to provide services through the remainder of the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2006. The amount approved by the Senate was \$58,288,776 of General Revenue.

Our office has seen many visiting groups over the past weeks. A few of those include Herman High School Kammerchor, Linn High School Wildcat Jazz Ensemble, fine arts students from Crocker High School, Salem Upper Elementary 4th Graders, the cities of Rolla and St. James, Rolla Regional Economic Commission and many others. It is always a pleasure to see individuals from the district and hear their opinions on the variety of issues that we address.

As always, you are welcome to contact us by phone at (573) 751-2108, by e-mail at [frank.barnitz@senate.mo.gov](mailto:frank.barnitz@senate.mo.gov), by mail at Missouri State Senate, Room 425, State Capitol Building, Jefferson City, MO 65101. Or feel free to stop by my office in the Capitol, room 425.

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