



# THE STOUFFER REPORT

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Senate District 21

**Capitol Building, Room 332**  
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**For the Week of:**  
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## **Ballot Measures Will Be Fully in Place in the New Year**

As the new year approaches, the ballot measures approved in November that have not yet gone into effect will be enforced. The stem cell proposal, the minimum wage increase, and the plan changing how elected officials are paid will all be effective by Jan. 1. These measures have the potential to impact many Missourians, and I want to address each of them to offer better understanding and how interested citizens can continue to be involved.

Amendment 2, which went into effect earlier this month, allows any embryonic stem cell research permitted under federal law to be conducted in Missouri. Embryonic stem cell research (also known as somatic cell nuclear transfer, or SCNT) is the process of harvesting stem cells from embryos that are produced from unfertilized eggs removed from women's bodies. The research is already legal in Missouri, though state funds cannot support the practice. However, state funds for non-stem-cell-related activities can go to institutions that practice stem cell research, and federal funding for research on existing stem cell lines was allowed in 2001.

Although supporters say SCNT has the potential to produce life-saving cures and boost the state's economy, opponents say the practice unethically destroys human life and has been unsuccessful, unlike adult stem cell research, after decades of clinical trials. Further, opponents are rallying to support a new initiative overturning Amendment 2, which they say contained misleading language distorting the definition of cloning and the true purpose of the ballot measure.

A lot of constituents have contacted my office to support or oppose such an effort. Many are asking how they can help fight Amendment 2 now that it has been passed. One way to get involved is to attend the Concerned Women for America of Missouri's Watchdog Lobby Day entitled, "Amendment 2: Where Do We Go from Here?" on Wednesday, Jan. 10. Visit [www.missouri.cwfa.org](http://www.missouri.cwfa.org) for more details. Opponents of the repeal should continue to voice their opinions to my office and their state representatives.

The minimum wage increase widely approved by voters goes into effect Jan. 1. The plan, known as Proposition B, raises the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.50 per hour or to the level of the federal minimum wage, if it is higher. The wage will then be increased every year for inflation based on the Consumer Price Index. Supporters of the wage increase say it will improve the standard of living for Missouri workers, though opponents say it will mean fewer jobs for the very people it is intended to help.

To help answer questions about the wage increase, the Missouri Division of Labor Standards has set up a Web site at [www.MoMinimumWage.com](http://www.MoMinimumWage.com). The site addresses many frequently asked questions, provides links to the ballot language, and lists contact information for further inquiries of the labor standards division. This is an excellent resource for Missourians, and I recommend that all those who might be affected check the site for more information.

Amendment 7, which changes the way elected officials are paid and receive pensions, also goes into effect in January. The measure prohibits pension payments for judges, state lawmakers and statewide elected officials who have been convicted of a felony. Supporters say it is needed to keep corrupt officials from milking taxpayer-funded pensions. However, controversy arose as it became clearer that the amendment also allows pay raises for lawmakers, statewide elected officials and judges to be implemented without a vote by the Legislature.

Amendment 7 automatically enacts a citizens' commission's recommendations for pay raises unless lawmakers reject the pay raises by a two-thirds vote. This provision was not mentioned in the ballot summary, though it was described in detail in this column two weeks before the election. The commission has already recommended that judges, lawmakers and statewide elected officials receive an additional \$1,200 per year and an extra 4 percent of their annual salary. The raise would go into effect in 2007 for judges and statewide officials and in 2009 for lawmakers. Associate circuit judges will receive an additional \$2,000 raise. These salary increases are similar to those given to state employees in recent years.

Each of these ballot measures has the potential to impact the lives of Missourians, and all citizens should get involved in these and other issues affecting them.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at [bstouffer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov).

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