



Alter's Angle

A LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
FROM SEN. BILL ALTER



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Week of Jan. 9, 2006

A 22nd Senate District Send-Off

This is a first in my effort to give you a weekly update on the activities in Jefferson City that affect you. The Missouri Senate last week kicked off the 2006 legislative session with the goal of advancing legislation that makes Missouri an even better place to live, work and do business. The highlight of this week was Gov. Matt Blunt's State of the State address to the General Assembly.

Because Missouri experienced a revenue increase of \$245 million more than originally anticipated, we have reason to be optimistic. The governor attributed the economic turnaround to last year's decisions to invest in system reforms, education and job growth. Gov. Blunt called on us to continue down this same path toward a more efficient, more effective and more responsive state government. We will answer that call.

One of the leading priorities on the Senate agenda this year is to further improve the Medicaid system by focusing on preventative care and increasing access to quality medical care using the most advanced technology. We also want to address the energy crisis facing Missourians and develop a comprehensive state-energy policy to explore alternative fuels, help poor people and senior citizens heat their homes and guarantee lower gas prices for consumers. Two other issues to receive significant attention this year will be determining the effect of eminent domain on property rights and doing a better job to protect our children from sexual predators.

As of now, I have filed four bills the legislature will consider this session. Senate Bill 753 prohibits sex offenders from entering school property without the consent of the principal or administrator. Another of my bills, SB 784, expands the definition of a “peace disturbance.” I also filed SB 785 to allow any jailer to serve an arrest warrant for a person who is already an inmate in the custody of the facility at which the jailer is employed.

My fourth bill, SB 763, has received a lot of recent media attention. This bill is a result of a project that I put together with our district’s fifth-grade students. As a civics lesson, I asked the students to write an essay titled, “It Ought To Be A Law.”

The response was tremendous. I chose an essay written by Kristen Bogert from Cedar Hill Intermediate School. From her proposal, I drafted legislation with the intent to combat drinking and driving by prohibiting the sale of individually packaged beer at convenience stores and grocery stores.

The measure has certainly garnered feedback from across the state, and as good as that is, I think it is also important to also acknowledge the value of the fifth-graders’ gaining learning experience about the legislative process. I would like to commend the students for their impressive efforts and intelligent responses.

This session, I am co-sponsoring a bill with Sen. John Griesheimer, R-Washington, to make emissions regulations in the St. Louis metropolitan and Jefferson County area more consumer-friendly. SB 583 changes the current emissions-testing process, and no longer requires that vehicles be tested at the few specialized emissions-testing stations in the area, but instead allows safety inspectors and other motor vehicle repair workers to perform emissions tests once they pass an emissions-system repair certification program. The act also provides exemption from emissions testing for motor vehicles manufactured prior to 1996. These and other considerations will make emissions testing more convenient for the people and more cost-effective for the state.

I will go into further detail about the measures I mentioned as the session progresses. Feel free to contact me any time to express your thoughts or concerns so that I may most effectively represent you in the Missouri Senate.

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Sen. Alter represents northern Jefferson County.