



MISSOURI SENATE

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For Immediate Release:
February 28, 2006

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Senate Advances Crowell's Bill Helping Guard Members Pay for Education

JEFFERSON CITY — The Missouri Senate recently approved a bill sponsored by Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, improving the state-funded education assistance provided to Missouri National Guard Members in exchange for their military service.

“When our young men and women sign up to serve in the National Guard, they do so with the understanding that they will receive tuition assistance in return for serving their country,” Crowell said. “Unfortunately the way the system is currently set up prevents members from fully utilizing this benefit.”

Under current law, if members of the Missouri National Guard terminate their service within three years of completing their last semester of college that funding was provided, educational assistance stops and recipients are required to repay the tuition assistance in full. The length of deployments sometimes prevent the members from furthering their education before the three-year window—an unintended consequence for active-duty members serving their country.

SB 701 removes the three-year provision, and simply requires a member to be in active drilling status to receive education assistance. The measure also requires a guard member to only repay a school loan or grant if he or she fails to maintain active military affiliation while enrolled in school.

“The National Guard is crucial in responding to emergencies, disasters and wars, and strong recruiting incentives like tuition assistance are critical in sustaining the Guard’s vitality,” Crowell said. “We made a promise to Guard members to help pay for their education in exchange for their courageous service, and this legislation enables us to fulfill that promise.”

The legislation will now be considered in the House.