



Office of  
**Jason Crowell** State Senator  
The Crowell Connection

Senator Jason Crowell – Serving Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry, and Scott Counties.

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## Right and Wrong

### *Legal v. Illegal Immigration*

Ever since September 11<sup>th</sup> shook our sense of security, the threat of terrorism on U.S. soil has become an everyday reality. This, added to the significant drain on taxpayer resources, has increased the need for stronger efforts to prevent illegal immigration. It is an issue that demands serious legislative attention.



To craft an effective policy on immigration, we must first move to protect our borders. President Bush has directed that individual states contribute to this effort by sending National Guard units on short-term assignments to support the Border Patrol. Governor

Blunt responded with a public announcement that soldiers from Missouri would participate — a decision I fully support.

In addition to sealing the border, we must stop offering incentives to illegal immigrants. There is already a naturalization process in place for those who wish to become citizens of the United States, so no one who is here illegally should be allowed, much less encouraged, to take state services designed to benefit law-abiding Missourians. During the 2006 legislative session, the Missouri Senate passed a sweeping reform bill that

would crack down on illegal immigration. This legislation proposed that state agencies administering public assistance work with local governments and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to ensure proper citizenship verification.

The bill also required that state and local programs, including Medicaid, restrict participation to citizens and legal residents. Certain programs required by federal law would be exempt, ensuring that people needing emergency medical attention would receive it. Furthermore, the measure barred illegal immigrants from attending public colleges and universities. Other legislation this session aimed for stricter penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegals. Unfortunately, we ran out of time before the legislation could be passed by the Missouri House, and the legislation will have to be reintroduced when lawmakers reconvene next year.

Federal law currently sets a quota system dictating how many people can legally immigrate to the United States, and in many cases, the wait lasts years or possibly decades. Allowing millions of people to bypass this system and slip across the border is fundamentally unfair, especially to potential immigrants who lawfully wait years for the opportunity to come to America. I support and believe we are a nation of immigrants but when my neighbors visit my home they do so by the front door in the light; immigration should follow that same principle.

The State of Missouri must do what it can to contribute to the national effort as Congress seeks to pass a national immigration policy. I salute the efforts of U.S. Senators Kit Bond and Jim Talent and Congresswoman JoAnn Emerson for advocating common-sense immigration reform and opposing blanket-amnesty for illegals. State and federal lawmakers must continue to work together to solve the problem of illegal immigration and I will do all I can as your voice in the Missouri Senate to do this.

### **Contact Me**

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: [jcrowell@senate.mo.gov](mailto:jcrowell@senate.mo.gov) or visit me on the web at [www.jasoncrowell.com](http://www.jasoncrowell.com).

## Contact Information

**Capitol Office**  
State Capitol Building  
Room 323  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**Website:**  
<http://www.senate.mo.gov/crowell>

**Phone Number:**  
573.751.2459  
**Fax:**  
573.522.9289