



## 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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# For Those Who Secure Our Country

As we live and breathe today, the number of our nation's veterans grow. Thousands of American men and women are defending the tenets of democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan and many other politically unstable locales around the globe. As in all our wars past, America's service men and women are sacrificing a great deal so that



Sen. Crowell greets National Guard members as they embark on the War on Terror in 2002.

we here at home can enjoy the rights that their courage makes possible.

The 2006 General Assembly approved measures in the name of those who put their lives on the line to secure democracy. The following are brief descriptions of the legislation, one of which requires voter approval before it can become law:

### **SB 701—National Guard Tuition Assistance**

Missouri helps members of the National Guard pay for higher education. Previously, members had to remain in the National Guard for three years from the last semester that they received tuition assistance. However, when Guard members are deployed, they are unable to enroll in classes and utilize tuition assistance and the three-year window closes before they can fully use the tuition aid. I sponsored legislation that has removed the three-year provision and simply requires a Guard member to be in active-drilling status while they are utilizing tuition assistance.

### **House Bill 1787—Guard at Home Program**

The "Guard at Home" program, which became effective July 1, 2006, will provide an

important benefit to hundreds of deserving Missouri families. The program is designed to financially assist families of National Guard members or reservists who have been deployed for active duty. Under the measure, returning guard members will also get help with training and employment as they re-enter the workforce. Eligible families are those in which the primary income-earner was called to active duty for more than four months and who suffer financial hardship due to a lack of outside resources.

### **SJR 26—Tax Exemptions**

Property of veteran-service organizations, such as the American Legion or the Veterans of Foreign Wars, have generally been considered tax exempt because they are devoted to charitable work. However, some county assessors have started taxing the property because the Missouri Constitution does not expressly exempt them from property taxes. The Legislature approved SJR 26, which exempts veteran's organizations from paying property taxes. Veteran's organizations exist to offer religious, scientific, hospital or charitable services to those who have sacrificed for the good of this country. This exemption is by no means a reward; it is just the right thing to do so veterans organizations can continue to operate as not-for-profit entities. Because the Legislature approved the measure, the issue now goes before the voters this November 7, please vote yes.

### **SB 845—Fee and Procedural Waiver**

While some Missourians sacrifice to serve their state and country, they end up jeopardizing their personal businesses, and therefore their livelihoods, when they forget to file an annual registration report. This act allows the secretary of state to waive reinstatement fees and the procedures required for reinstatement if a corporation was administratively dissolved because of a failure to file an annual registration report due to military service. In such a circumstance, the secretary of state is authorized to waive all late fees for all required filings, cancel the certificate of dissolution and reinstate the corporation.

### **HB 984—POW/MIA Flag**

An important aspect of our patriotic holidays that often goes overlooked is that many of our soldiers are unaccounted for — they are either prisoners of war or missing in action. This measure encourages all government buildings, businesses and Missouri residents to display the POW/MIA flag on Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, September 11<sup>th</sup> and Veterans Day.

I also helped secure an increase of \$8,345,956 in new funding for FYO7. This funding went toward a 4 percent pay increase for state workers at veteran's homes, an 8 percent pay raise for nurses, inflationary costs and more beds for the homes.

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I was recently presented with a certificate of appreciation by the Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations for my dedication to representing Missouri veterans' best interests as chairman of the Senate committee on Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws. The brave men and women who have put their lives on the

line for our country deserve to be taken care of to the best of our abilities.

### 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 <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>.

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