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MISSOURI SENATE

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Sen. Crowell Files Legislation To Protect Consumers

JEFFERSON CITY— Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, today filed a bill to protect consumers from unwanted telecommunications solicitations.

Current law protects only residential landline subscribers from telemarketing calls. Crowell's legislation would allow both residential and business wireless subscribers to add their phone numbers to the state's No Call list. The bill would also prevent solicitors from sending unwanted junk faxes to residential and business landline subscribers.

"With more and more people relying on cellular phones and fax machines to communicate and do business, landline telephones are not the only devices on which telemarketers prey," Crowell said. "Companies sending unsolicited faxes or calling cell phones are advertising at the expense of consumers who don't want the solicitation in the first place."

Under Crowell's proposed law, the definition of telephone solicitation is broadened to include facsimiles, graphic imaging or data communication, including text messages. The bill also tackles the problem of businesses disseminating private information about cell-phone customers to anyone willing to pay the price. A provision was included in the bill forbidding wireless providers from releasing and other entities from receiving Missouri cell phone records unless they receive a written request from the customer.

"The Missouri Legislature took a significant step forward in 2000 to address complaints from citizens about telemarketing phone calls that interrupted their dinners and valuable time at home," Crowell said. "We need to take our efforts further to free up fax and telephone lines so they can be used for their intended purposes."

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