



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
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# Bill Would Help Protect Highway Workers in Missouri

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JEFFERSON CITY – This week I testified in support of legislation designed to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities in highway construction zones. Senate Bill 754 modifies state law with respect to highway work zones and creates the crime of “endangerment of a highway worker.”

During the past six years, there have been 119 fatalities in highway construction zones and more than six thousand injuries. Speeding is the prevailing factor in work zone crashes and driver inattention is the second contributing factor. Improper lane use, passing on the wrong side of the roadway and drinking also contribute to injuries and fatalities in highway work zones.

SB 754 calls for increased fines for repeat traffic offenses in work zones and provides a definition for highway workers to include employees of MODOT, contractors and subcontractors.

The bill creates the crime of “endangerment of a highway worker.” Persons guilty of the offense will have eight points assessed against their driver’s license, resulting in an automatic thirty-day suspension and a fine not to exceed \$1,000. The main elements of the offense include speeding by more than 15 mph, failing to stop for a flagman or obey traffic control devices, driving through or around a work zone, and physically assaulting or attempting to assault or threaten a highway worker.

The bill also creates the crime of “aggravated endangerment of a highway worker.” Motorists who injure a highway worker during the commission of one of the previously mentioned offenses will have 12 points assessed against their driver’s license, resulting in a one year license revocation and a fine not to exceed \$5,000. If a highway worker is killed as a result of a traffic infraction in a work zone, the fine increases to not more than \$10,000.

The legislation sends the message that extra caution is required in highway work zones and violating traffic laws while driving in a work zone is a serious offense. A safer environment in work zones will protect highway workers and protect all motorists passing through a work zone.

With increased traffic and the increase in the number of orange barrels that will be seen across the state throughout the coming years as a result of Amendment Three dollars, SB 754 is timely legislation that will provide protection to all highway workers.

The Second Regular Session of the 93rd Missouri General Assembly will run through Friday, May 12.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: [delbertscott@senate.mo.gov](mailto:delbertscott@senate.mo.gov)