



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Delbert Scott
28th Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 221
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Weekly Column for the
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**Contact: Debbie Poire
(573) 751-8793**

THIS IS A REVISED COPY SENATOR SCOTT'S COLUMN

Review of Legislative Session

JEFFERSON CITY – In the final week of the legislative session, lawmakers worked late into the night on several occasions to compromise on and pass legislation before the 6 p.m. Friday deadline.

Lawmakers agreed to legislation requiring most gasoline sold in Missouri to contain a 10 percent ethanol blend. House Bill 1270 requires the ethanol standard to be in place by Jan. 1, 2008. Jet fuel and premium gasoline are exempt from the measure, and the mandate would be suspended if ethanol blends cost more than regular unleaded gasoline. Ethanol is a motor fuel derived from agricultural products, such as corn.

A House bill imposing harsher penalties on sex offenders also received final approval. HB 1698 imposes mandatory life sentences against certain repeat sex offenders, establishes a toll-free hotline to report sexual abuse and allows probation and parole officers to have access to registered sex offenders' personal computers to look for evidence of child pornography. The measure also enhances penalties against those convicted of certain forcible sexual offenses, denies bail to those convicted of child molestation or possession of child pornography, and establishes a grant program to fund the hiring and training of online detectives to investigate those who use the Internet to lure children.

A measure changing some state highway-safety regulations has also been approved. SB 872 increases fines for various offenses that occur within highway work or construction zones and creates the crime of "endangerment of a highway worker." In addition, the measure stiffens penalties against motorists who fail to move over when approached by an emergency vehicle or do not move over when approaching a stationary emergency vehicle. SB 872 also imposes an additional fine and driving

suspension on any person who fails to yield the right-of-way when the violation results in physical injury or death.

Lawmakers also sent to the governor a bill implementing a new avenue to public education for Missouri students. SB 912 establishes a virtual school program that utilizes the Internet to reach children at home for a variety of reasons. Virtual schools are intended to be used by students who are temporarily homebound or who want to take advanced courses not offered in their school districts. Under the program, students use a personal computer to access lessons modeled on in-class instruction. An estimated 2 to 4 percent of the public school body would be enrolled. Virtual schools would be subject to all laws applicable to Missouri public school districts.

In 2006, 700 bills were introduced in the Senate, and 93 were passed by both chambers. Of the 23 Senate Joint Resolutions introduced, one has been truly agreed to. Lawmakers convene again in 2007 for the First Regular Session of the 94th Missouri General Assembly.

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.state.mo.us

*Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas,
Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.*