



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
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# Child Eye Exams

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JEFFERSON CITY – The leading causes of vision loss among children are uncorrected refractive errors, strabismus or crossed eyes, amblyopia or lazy eye, and injury. There is a lot of evidence that half of visual impairment and blindness can be prevented through early detection and timely treatment.

For the past two legislative sessions, I have introduced legislation to provide eye examinations for all Missouri schoolchildren. Although the Childcare Vision Act was voted out of committee and sent to the Senate floor for debate, time ran out in the session and my colleagues did not have an opportunity to consider this important legislation.

I will sponsor the act again in the 2007 legislative session and hope we can send the bill to the governor for his signature

The goal of the Childcare Vision Act is to ensure detection of any eye disease or disorder at a more treatable age. It presents an opportunity to correct many vision problems in order to prevent a student from getting a bad start in school due to poor eyesight.

The brain's vision system is mature when a child reaches eight to ten years of age. That's why it's important to have children's eyes checked early to assure they have the best vision possible.

I am sponsoring this legislation because I am among those with a permanent vision disability, which is why I have had to wear glasses since I was about 16 years old. My ophthalmologist told me in recent years that if I would have had treatment for lazy eye at an early age, the nerve degeneration would not have happened.

The act will establish channels for those who cannot afford an eye exam to receive assistance. The bill would require the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Health and Senior Services to compile and maintain a list of health professionals who could provide eye examinations or vision correction on a free or reduced cost basis.

It's our goal to identify these kids at an early age and get them to where they are not held back, while preventing eye damage as they grow up.

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)

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