



MISSOURI SENATE  
JEFFERSON CITY

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## **Sen. Chris Koster Vows to Fight for Increase in Salaries of Sheriff's Deputies across Missouri**

JEFFERSON CITY— Sen. Chris Koster, R-Harrisonville, pre-filed legislation today to establish the Public Safety Enhancement Fund, which will supplement the salaries of underpaid sheriff's deputies throughout the state of Missouri. More than 700 deputies in the state currently earn substandard wages and have an average annual salary of \$20,600. Deputies in several Missouri counties earn starting salaries of less than \$20,000 per year.

"The salaries of Missouri's deputy sheriffs have reached a critical juncture. Many county governments across our state have failed to recognize the importance of paying deputies anything close to a living wage," Koster said.

"These deputies are putting their lives on the line everyday," Koster added. "My proposal will bring their salaries more in-line with the dangerous nature of the jobs we ask them to perform."

Koster has been a longtime crusader of pay raises for deputy sheriffs. When he became Prosecuting Attorney in Cass County in 1994, Cass County deputies were among the grossly underpaid law enforcement officers in the state. When he left his 10-year post as prosecutor in 2004, Cass County sheriff's deputies had the highest starting pay in Missouri, beginning their employment at approximately \$35,000 a year.

"It is time that the rest of Missouri follows suit," Koster said. "It is time to pay Missouri sheriff's deputies what they deserve."

Under Koster's bill, any county in Missouri that currently pays deputies less than \$28,000 annually can apply for grants to increase salaries through the Public Safety Enhancement Fund. In the first year, qualified county applicants would receive a maximum of \$8,000 for each deputy who does not earn the minimum salary, or an amount sufficient to lift a deputy's salary to \$28,000, whichever is less. The state supplement then would decrease incrementally for the three years following. The grant program would expire after state fiscal year 2011.

Counties that apply must agree to annually pay at least \$28,000 to their deputies during the four-year time frame that the Public Safety Enhancement Fund exists and for the five years thereafter.

Koster filed the bill today along with two others pieces of legislation. The first would encourage more environmentally friendly energy production throughout the state, and the other increases the use of DNA in court decisions.

The First Regular Session of the 94<sup>th</sup> General Assembly will convene on Jan. 3, 2007.

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