



Insurance Reforms Headed to the Governor

JEFFERSON CITY — One of the things I wanted to get done this year in the State Senate was fix some of the problems with insurance in Missouri. Last week, I told you how we were able to make health insurance a better deal for employers and employees with [House Bill 818](#), the Missouri Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act. Then, in the final days of the session, we were able to pass reforms that modernize dealing with state laws regarding insurance operations in my [Senate Bill 66](#).

For two years we have tried to protect consumers from unscrupulous insurance tactics. Some people have lost their life savings, even their homes, to insurance investment scams. People need to know that when they purchase insurance, it will protect their interests, not exploit their trust. I know my bill will give them more peace of mind.

[Senate Bill 66](#) standardizes enforcement of insurance statutes. Violations will be classified into five levels of severity, and the director of the state Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions, and Professional Registration will be able to better monitor and influence standards of agent conduct. The end product will be a better purchasing experience, especially for senior citizens who might have been taken advantage of when buying annuities and life insurance. It's money they have worked for their entire lives. It needs to be there to take care of them in their golden years.

The bill also addresses issues with title insurance, including a prohibition on the misuse or commingling of real estate closing or settlement funds. Currently, state law has no provisions regarding the handling of escrow funds. Three major title insurance companies in the St. Louis area failed in just the last year. No wonder some consumers don't have confidence that the title insurance they place in escrow is not used to prop up some other business – possibly something that will fail and take their hard-earned money with it. The changes in my bill will ensure the insurance and annuities people purchase now are fair and will be there in the future when they want to cash them in.

Governor Blunt and the state's insurance department have already expressed great support for [SB 66](#). I look forward to seeing the governor sign these reforms and to seeing them take effect August 28th.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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