



MISSOURI SENATE

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Sen. Kevin Engler to File Legislation to Restrict Lobbyist Gifts & Discontinue License Fee Office Political Patronage System

FARMINGTON – Sen. Kevin Engler, (R-Farmington), has announced two bills he will prefile for the 2008 legislative session which are designed to promote integrity within state government. One bill will put strict limits on gifts public officials may accept from lobbyists, and the other will change the way the Department of Revenue contract fee offices are awarded.

In order to limit the gifts that elected officials, judges, and other public servants can accept, Sen. Engler will file a bill that would put an end to any gift that is defined as an expenditure by the Ethics Commission. Specifically, the bill would ban public officials from accepting meals, beverages, tickets to sporting events, and other forms of entertainment from lobbyists. Since Sen. Engler was elected to the legislature in 2002, he has not accepted any such gifts from lobbyists.

“I strongly believe that public servants should be in government to serve,” said Sen. Engler. “Accepting meals, drinks, tickets or other gifts from lobbyists often leaves the public with the perception that public officials become involved in public service for reasons that are less than wholesome. I believe that by banning lobbyist gifts, we can reassure the public that their elected officials have sought their office not for self-serving, but honorable reasons.”

Another piece of legislation Sen. Engler plans to file will modify the process in which contract fee offices are awarded. In Missouri, there are 183 local fee offices where residents can get their driver licenses and license plates. Fee agents, who are selected by the governor and contracted with the Department of Revenue, operate local license offices and make profits from the fee charged by each transaction. Sen. Engler’s bill would only allow contracts to be awarded only to non-profit organizations such as municipalities, school districts, charitable organizations, or for-profit entities that receive the contracts through a competitive bidding process.

“License fee offices should be awarded to charitable or non-profit entities whenever possible,” said Sen. Engler. “This bill will put an end to the system of political patronage which has been in effect for far too long, and hopefully result in a situation where the profits are utilized to the benefit of those people who patronize the license fee office.”

Pre-filed legislation will be numbered and available to the public on December 1st. March 1st is the final day for Senators to introduce legislation for the 2008 legislative session. The Second Regular Session of the 94th General Assembly begins on January 9 and ends on May 16.

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