



# SENATOR MATT BARTLE

**District 8 – Capitol Building, Room 319 Jefferson City, MO 65101**

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## **Senate Votes to Stop Automated Campaign Calls**

As we near the halfway point of the legislative session, the Missouri Senate took up and passed legislation to cut back on automated political calls to Missouri residents.

This legislation, SB 49, expands Missouri's No Call list, which was approved in 2000, to include more than just certain landline users. Under the bill, the 'No Call' law applies to cell phones, faxes and text messages. The legislation also includes automated phone calls, or "robocalls," which are often used for political ads. During the most recent election cycle, many Missourians complained that they had received multiple politically oriented robocalls.

SB 49 bans robocalls with certain exceptions, such as:

- Calls citizens have given permission to receive.
- Calls relating to a recent or current business or personal relationship.
- Calls preceded by a live person who obtains consent to play the automated message.
- Calls from a public safety agency notifying a person of an emergency.
- Calls from telecommunications companies made solely to verify the delivery of products or services.

In addition, SB 49 requires political phone calls to include a "paid for by" statement that identifies who funded the message. Violators may be subject to civil penalties of up to \$5,000 per violation.

Although First Amendment protections prohibit outright bans on all political phone calls, the 'No Call' law does allow us to place restrictions on automated calls to protect the privacy rights of Missourians.

Another bill approved by the Senate creates the Faith-Based Organization Liaison Act, which calls on the Missouri Department of Social Services to designate regional department employees to serve as liaisons between faith-based groups and citizens in their respective

regions. Liaisons will communicate with and promote faith-based organizations as a means of providing services for individuals who would otherwise require public assistance.

Under this act, Missourians in need will be better able to receive help. The state will work with faith-based organizations to expand the scope of assistance to those in need while saving taxpayer dollars by utilizing and promoting these organizations. The legislation prohibits liaisons from discriminating against any faith-based organization.

These bills make common-sense revisions to state law to cut down on unwanted phone calls and enhance services to those in need of assistance.

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 e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.mo.gov](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov) or by phone at (888) 711-9278.

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