



# SENATOR MATT BARTLE

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

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## **CAFO Legislation Touches on Divisive Issues**

This session lawmakers are considering a number of bills with far-reaching implications. Last week, members of the Senate agriculture committee approved controversial legislation affecting how counties can restrict large livestock operations. This measure brings up a host of ongoing debates, including the rights of local governments within the state and the growth of corporate agriculture in relation to family farms.

Senate Bill 364, which has seen significant debate both inside and outside of the Legislature, prohibits local governments from enacting health ordinances that restrict concentrated animal feeding operations, or CAFOs. Instead, a statewide standard would be enforced. The legislation also protects farmers from nuisance lawsuits.

Debate over the issue touches on the future of agriculture in Missouri and governmental controls on economic development. Supporters of the legislation say local health ordinances restrict the growth of farming operations, which they say is inevitable and necessary for farmers to continue making a living. They also say that legal differences between counties make it hard for farming operations to know the law.

Opponents say SB 364 undermines local control and family farmers in favor of state authority and corporate agribusiness. They say local control needs to be maintained so communities can restrict operations that could affect the health and well-being of residents. In addition, opponents say this legislation makes it harder for small farms to compete with industrial agriculture.

The debate is underscored by continuing events in Arrow Rock, a small town and National Historic Landmark in west-central Missouri whose primary industry is tourism. Residents are concerned the odor from a 4,800-hog operation proposed for the area will affect local businesses and the environment. Developers say there are precautions in place minimizing the impact on the community.

Differences on these issues run deep in Missouri, and like so many of the bills brought before the General Assembly in Jefferson City, this one will not be easily resolved. The issue should soon be put before the Legislature for deliberation.

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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