



# SENATOR MATT BARTLE

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## **Lawmakers Debate Measure Improving Public Safety**

Missouri's DNA Profiling System has been an outstanding success since it was expanded in 2005. The new program, which now takes DNA samples of all felony offenders in the state, has dramatically increased the number of cold cases law enforcement has been able to solve. This new system has resulted in arrests for hundreds of crimes that would not otherwise be solved, including many homicide and rape cases. In fact, Missouri law enforcement officials are getting hits on new rape or homicide cases each week.

I was pleased to be the sponsor of the original bill; however, we cannot rest on our accomplishments. Lawmakers are now advancing legislation further expanding the program to include the most heinous juvenile and misdemeanor crimes and making other needed revisions to criminal law.

Senate Bill 660, which is currently advancing through the Legislature, expands the system to require DNA samples of juveniles who have been arrested for certain violent and sexual offenses. In addition, adults who have committed a Class A misdemeanor will also have a sample collected. We understand that many times the same individuals are committing crimes over and over again. I am confident that if we are able to take the DNA of these offenders when we catch them committing lower-level crimes, we will find that they are also responsible for more hard-core crimes.

SB 660 also makes other changes to state law to improve public safety. SB 660 modifies existing law prohibiting sex offenders from living within 1,000 feet of a school or child-care facility. The legislation clarifies the meaning of "resides" when applying to sex offenders. This will clean up any confusion and prevent a loophole that these criminals might exploit.

Keeping our communities safe is always a work in progress, and the state's criminal law is in constant need of revision to keep current. SB 660 proposes several needed changes to our law, and I am hopeful that it will end up passing the Legislature and landing on the governor's desk by the time the General Assembly adjourns in the middle of next month.

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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