



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of January 29, 2007**

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# Preserving Local Control

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JEFFERSON CITY – This week I introduced a constitutional amendment to preserve the authority of city councils, county commissions and other local government entities to adopt ordinances protecting the health and welfare of the people of Missouri.

Senate Joint Resolution 18 would send the constitutional amendment to a vote of the people in the General Election in 2008. The amendment would allow “the governing body of any county of this state, including the city of St. Louis, to adopt by ordinance or order regulations affecting the public health and welfare which are more restrictive than state law.”

This will ensure that the fundamental belief that I’ve always had is protected -- that government is best when it’s closest to the people it serves. If your local commissioners or your local folks are not in charge, then you’re very willing to put someone from St. Louis or Kansas City or Springfield in charge of what happens in your county.

I filed SJR 18 partly in response to legislation introduced this year which would prohibit cities and counties from enacting regulations more restrictive than state or federal law. Senate Bill 364 states “local laws regarding the licensing or operation of a farm or farming-related activity that are not identical to state law and regulations, as promulgated by the Department of Natural Resources, are rendered null and void by the act.”

Governor Blunt voiced his support for this state power grab during his recent State of the State address.

The Missouri Farm Bureau is aggressively lobbying for SB 364, which protects the interests of industrial agriculture over the interests of Missouri’s family farmers and rural citizens.

I think it's time that we got the battle lines drawn clearly – are you for local control or are you not for local control? Let's draw the lines, you vote against it, and then go home and tell your constituents you don't have faith in them.

I don't have much faith in a bill that went before the Senate Education Committee this week. Senate Bill 389 contains a number of measures affecting higher education, including the governor's plan to sell off part of the assets of the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority or MOHELA. In response, I have filed Senate Bill 362, which will make higher education more affordable for students of working families, while offering a bonding solution for construction projects on college campuses.

My bill would transfer 1.5 percent of MOHELA's assets each year, with the money used to increase funding for certain scholarship programs. That, in turn, would free up General Revenue funds for debt service on bonds to be used for campus construction.

But SB 369, the bill heard in committee this week, goes a lot farther than just approving the governor's ridiculous MOHELA scheme. The bill would punish colleges and universities that raise tuition higher than the rate of inflation by taking away five percent of their state funding. Recent tuition increases at Missouri colleges and universities are a direct result of cuts in state funding for higher education over the past few years, so why would lawmakers then turn around and punish colleges and universities for trying to make up for the decrease in state funding? It was a bad idea when it was introduced last year and it's still a bad idea.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-7852.