



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
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Political Phone Calls Added to No-Call List

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate this week gave first-round approval to a bill to rein in those obnoxious political phone calls that bombarded Missourians during the last election. Senate Bill 49 would add automated political phone calls or “robo-calls” to the state’s no call list, as well as cell phones, fax machines and text messaging devices. The bill would not apply to calls relating to a personal or business relationship or calls from a public safety agency.

I support this legislation to restrict these robo-calls to our fullest ability.

This week the Senate sent to the House a bill changing the licensing of cable TV companies from local governments to the Missouri Public Service Commission. The Missouri Video Franchise Bill would allow telephone companies to provide cable TV services.

The debate over how cable and phone companies provide video service has been going on since last year. Right now, cable TV companies establish franchise agreements with local governments in order to provide service. Telephone companies that want to enter the cable market in Missouri, such as AT&T, also must enter these local franchise agreements. Senate Bill 284 allows companies from both industries to receive a single statewide franchise to provide cable service.

Supporters of SB 284 say the bill will level the playing field for both industries. Last year cable companies wanted a provision in the bill requiring telecom companies to provide access to the entire area served by local video providers, rather than the most profitable parts. To address that concern, the SB 284 requires phone companies to offer cable service to a certain percentage of households.

One issue important to folks in rural Missouri is the maintenance and upkeep of our rural cemeteries. I presented Senate Bill 345 to the Economic Development, Tourism and Local Government Committee this week.

The act allows a county government to submit a property tax to voters to fund the maintenance of cemeteries. The tax could be no more than a quarter-cent per hundred dollars assessed valuation and could not take effect without voter approval.

I also had the pleasure of meeting with a lot of young farmers and future farmers this week. Members of the Future Farmers of America, Agricultural Leadership of Tomorrow and the Missouri Farm Bureau visited the capital. With the average age of farmers in Missouri being 57, it was good to see all the young farmers. I was able to listen to the concerns and challenges they face and then shared my vision of family farming and rural Missouri.

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