



# THE STOUFFER REPORT

**Senator Bill Stouffer**  
Senate District 21

**Capitol Building, Room 332**  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**For the Week of:**  
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## **Expansion of No Call Law Benefits Missourians**

Telemarketing has been an effective marketing tool since the 1980s, but the unsolicited phone calls soon became infamous. To help put a stop to the unwanted phone calls, Missouri lawmakers passed the state No Call law in 2000. However, the growth in cell phone use has given new opportunities to solicitors. Meanwhile, political campaigns are increasingly using automated phone calls, or “robocalls,” to market their message to potential voters. As a result, Missourians are again calling for restrictions on unsolicited phone calls, and state lawmakers are working to pass legislation to give them the peace and quiet they need.

Senate Bill 49, which the Senate recently gave first-round approval, expands Missouri’s No Call list 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 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, as many as eight in a single evening.

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 for the benefit of Missourians. Further, telemarketing bears a cost on consumers, whether in time or money, and businesses should not have the right to impose those costs on consumers. I will continue working to implement this common-sense legislation.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at [bstouffer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov).

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