



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

For the Week of:
March 12, 2007

Contact: Aaron Baker
(573) 751-1507

Special Report: Funding For Sheriff's Deputies

For most legislators the regular legislative session, lasting from January through May, is a strenuous series of decisions that affect the lives of Missourians. Some decisions are small and somewhat unnecessary — such as naming a state amphibian — and some are significant, like school funding or state-sponsored health care.

However, serving as a lawmaker means more than just making choices. It is about representing the needs of your district. These needs range from asking the Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) to remove thistles adjacent to private property on Interstate 70 to helping a returning soldier get his driver's license back after its suspension while overseas.

Sometimes lawmakers can at once provide constituent service and take part in legislative action. On rare occasions, we are given the opportunity to cast votes to send a message to the rest of the state — when something is just not right.

Under the banner of cultivating rural Missouri, I have worked diligently to ensure that the state is meeting the needs of our local area. This includes our schools, jobs and roads. It also includes our law enforcement.

For far too long Missouri has neglected the men and women protecting her safety at home. Sheriff's deputies — part of the posse of heroes in our midst — have been underpaid and underfunded for far too long.

Last week, an interesting amendment came up for a vote on a local government bill to create a state police system, whereby local law enforcement is provided and funded by the state. Although it had no chance to be included in the later version of the bill as it moved through the legislative process, to further the discussion I voted for the amendment. It did not pass.

The message is clear — we need to do something about funding local law enforcement. Although local sheriffs may have taken offense to this action, I know they agree that something needs to be done. And without conversation or attention on the matter, little can be accomplished.

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.

-END-