



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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Inclement Weather Make-Up Days For Public Schools

Most children look forward to a few snow days each year. These unforeseen days off from school might mean grabbing their sleds and heading for their favorite snow-covered hills. These days can also cause a headache for school officials. One or two snow days a year will not cause too much havoc in a district's school schedule, but 8, 9, even 10 days of missed school can change graduation dates, testing schedules and much more.

In December, Missouri received its first taste of winter weather, which resulted in some school districts missing a couple of days of school. The skies unleashed a major ice and snow storm in January, leaving some schools in marked disaster areas out of session for a week, some even two.

A measure filed this year, House Bill 678, tackles the missed school days resulting from the massive ice storms that hit our state back in January. According to the bill, school districts in the counties declared a federal disaster area after the January 2007 ice storms are not required to make up time lost from school from January 15 to January 22. These school districts are also excused from the requirement of scheduling two-thirds of their missed days into next year's school calendar.

None of the schools in the 21st Senate District are located in the disaster areas declared by Governor Blunt. However, HB 678 also deals with school districts in counties who were not included in the federal disaster area. Those schools that missed eight or more days due to inclement weather are not required to make up the days or hours for six of those missed days. The requirement for scheduling two-thirds of the missed days into the next year's calendar would also be waived for the 2007-2008 school year.

Having already cleared the House, HB 678 was referred to the Senate Education Committee on March 12.

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Although I believe this piece of legislation is beneficial to our school districts, I would like to go a step further. Instead of the Legislature spending precious time dealing with this issue of missed school days each year, we should go ahead and apply this measure so it is automatically enacted every year. Missouri's weather is hard to predict and our children should not have to pay for every storm day taken off from school, which are cancelled to ensure their safety as well as the educators and staff there to instruct them.

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.

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