



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

For the Week of:
Sept. 3, 2007

Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Contact: Aaron Baker
(573) 751-1507

Senate Bills Become Law

*Health Care Reform, Higher Education Package,
and Tax Incentives Among New Laws*

Most of the legislation passed during the regular session ending in May took effect on Aug. 28. Among the new laws now in effect are Senate bills making changes to health care, higher education, and tax incentives.

[Senate Bill 577](#) makes several reforms to Missouri's state-sponsored medical insurance, now called Mo HealthNet. The new program focuses on preventive measures, rather than the more expensive reactive care by encouraging patients to take steps toward a healthy lifestyle — such as losing weight or quitting smoking. In order to better combat fraud in the system, Mo HealthNet asks providers to keep stricter records and creates protections for “whistleblowers.” Programs to benefit the working disabled and low-income women are also contained in the new law.

An extensive higher education package also went into effect Aug. 28. [Senate Bill 389](#) enables several construction projects on Missouri's college campuses with funds gained from the sale of a portion of the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority's (MOHELA) assets. The bill also contains scholarship increases for the state's community college, university, and private college students. Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, schools will no longer be able to raise tuition higher than the rate of inflation set by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or they will risk losing up to 5 percent of their state appropriation for that year. The Coordinating Board for Higher Education now has greater authority to enforce this and other policies affecting colleges and universities.

MORE

Missouri manufactures and businesses are able to apply for several tax credits now that [Senate Bill 30](#) has gone into effect. The bill creates an exemption from state and local sales taxes for the cost of utilities, chemicals, machinery, equipment, and materials used while manufacturing a product. The bill contains similar provisions for radio and television broadcasting. Senate Bill 30 also expands eligibility for the [Property Tax Credit Claim](#) (also know as the “Circuit Breaker Tax Credit”) — a program that makes it easier for seniors and the disabled to afford their rent or property taxes.

Constitutionally, bills that the governor does not veto are effective 90 days from the last day of the regular session unless the bill contains an emergency clause. In that case, the bill becomes law immediately upon the governor’s signature. Fifty-five Senate bills went into effect on Aug. 28.

For a complete list of the bills signed by the governor, visit www.gov.mo.gov (click on press room, legislative actions). If you have questions or comments about any of the bills mentioned above, or any other issue, please call my office toll free (866) 768-3987 or send me an e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

- END -