



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Capitol Building, Room 332

Senate District 21
Jefferson City, MO 65101

For the Week of:
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Thanksgiving — A Time to Give Back to Your Community

To a lot of people, the Thanksgiving holiday means spending time with family members and friends while gathering around a festive fall feast. I remember our first Thanksgiving together as a married couple. Sue Ellen and I were living in a trailer in Columbia while I was attending school. Our first Thanksgiving menu included baked chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, rolls, and dressing.

Unfortunately, my wife did not receive cookbooks at her wedding showers or on the day of our marriage. And unlike today's brides, she couldn't "Google" her favorite recipes, either. She could have used a little direction on the stuffing. I thought Goodyear could have patented her concoction of milk, eggs, and bread crumbs as it bounced back off my plate. The chicken was terribly dry and the gravy tasted like corn starch. And like any good husband, I couldn't have been any more thankful for her food and company.

Today, Sue Ellen prepares a Thanksgiving feast for up to 25 gathered around the same table in the same home that I grew up in. My favorite part is the cornucopia of pies she prepares. I take credit for her cooking and baking skills, after years of experiencing "trial and error" at her side, always with a smile and a deep appreciation of her efforts. Of course, my favorite Thanksgiving memory is when Sue Ellen was allowed to leave the hospital after her accident, just for a day, to spend time with her family in 2003.

However, not everyone has the benefit of family, friends, and food.

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I'd like to take the time to invite you to extend your hands and hearts and volunteer in your community. Volunteers help make Missouri a better place to live, work and play. It is important to lend a helping hand to someone who might have even less. Each and every day we should all try to live up to the Lord's command to honor and love thy neighbors.

A couple of Bible verses help describe the Lord's work for volunteers: "They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone," (Numbers 11:17) and "...we will share with you whatever good things the Lord gives us," (Numbers 10:32).

I am of the opinion that people can do a much better job of taking care of their flock than the government. I'm reminded of the times we would gather at the local country school or church to prepare food baskets for local families in need.

Last session, the Legislature passed several bills to help volunteers keep the connection between the community and the people who live in it. The Faith-Based Liaison Act (Senate Bill 46) directs the State Department of Social Services to appoint liaisons to work with the different faith-based organizations in their area. Not only do some of these groups provide warm meals and a roof over the heads of our state's citizens in need, they provide faith and hope for those who need it the most.

Another measure that passed last session, House Bill 453, increases opportunities for needy Missourians to receive adequate nutrition through local food banks by encouraging individuals and businesses to donate food or cash to local food pantries.

If you would like to find out food bank locations in your county or have questions or comments about any other issue, please call my office toll free (866) 768-3987 or send me an e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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