



MISSOURI SENATE

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**A Column for the Week
of June 18, 2007**

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A Compact for Everyone's Safety

JEFFERSON CITY — Another one of my priorities for this past legislative session has been signed into law, as Governor Blunt affixed his signature to [Senate Bill 84](#), a measure that modifies provisions relating to child placements and protection.

More specifically, SB 84 contains some key components found in SB 292, a bill I sponsored that revised the more than 50-year-old Interstate Compact for Juveniles. This compact is an agreement between Missouri and other states on what to do with juvenile delinquents who have escaped supervision to another state. The problem with it is that in 1955, when it was first put into effect, officials didn't think of the widespread use of air travel an escaping juvenile might use. Also, records weren't kept in easily accessible databases that states now can share. This update will ensure that juveniles are not falling through the cracks. Joining this new compact will modernize the methods originally employed and will make this state a member of the Interstate Commission for Juveniles. It will also require the state to select a compact administrator to oversee the transfer of those subject to the compact. The compact will go into effect on August 28th, 2007 or when at least 35 states approve it. We're getting close to that number with 33 now signed up and a few more pending. It's a provision we need to protect the safety of our citizens and ensure that these juveniles are dealt with in the proper manner. The bill will also revise the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children that deals with private and independent adoptions across state lines.

Senate Bill 84 will also specify that "Amber Alerts" are issued to help identify and locate abducted children, not adults. According to the new law, an abducted child is defined as one whose whereabouts is unknown and is less than 18 years old, believed by law enforcement to be a victim of kidnapping. The act will create an advisory system to help identify and locate missing endangered persons, including the physically or mentally disabled who are missing

under conditions indicating they might be in danger or at least under involuntary or unknown circumstances.

With SB 84 now signed, we'll be updating our system to better reflect the realities of today, instead of trying to rely on what was created more than half a century ago.

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Senator Robert Mayer represents the people of Wayne, Ripley, Butler, Stoddard, New Madrid, Pemiscot and Dunklin counties in the Missouri Senate.