



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
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# Legislature Approves Sweeping Health Care Reform, Concludes 2007 Session

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JEFFERSON CITY – During the final week of session, legislators worked quickly to complete several key legislative issues. The constitutional deadline for completing legislation was 6 p.m. on Friday, May 18.

Perhaps the biggest issue to be considered by lawmakers this year was transforming the state health care system for those in need of assistance. Lawmakers approved Senate Bill 577, which establishes MO HealthNet, on the final day of session after weeks of negotiation between members of the House and Senate. MO Health Net replaces the state Medicaid program created decades ago. The former Medicaid program was innovative when it was implemented in the 1960's, but grew over the years into a bloated, bureaucratic nightmare that failed to meet the needs of those it was designed to serve. I will discuss this sweeping health care reform in greater detail in the coming weeks.

Senate Bill 62, which went to the governor this week, overturns a number of court decisions that require Missourians to retreat or await physical aggression before using deadly force against intruders in their homes or vehicles. Also called the Castle Doctrine, the legislation prevents frivolous lawsuits against those that use force in their defense.

The bill also repeals the requirement that Missouri residents must get permits from their local sheriff before buying a handgun. Other provisions in SB 62 include allowing people who have law enforcement training to skip weapons handling courses in order to get a concealed weapon permit, allowing law enforcement departments to sell confiscated weapons, and

putting mental health information in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System to determine eligibility to buy guns.

Legislation creating renewable energy targets for electric companies received approval from both the House and Senate. Under SB54, electric companies will need to make a “good faith effort” to ensure a percentage of their retail electric sales come from renewable energy technology. The legislation creates benchmarks of 4 percent by 2012, 8 percent by 2015, and 11 percent by 2020. The Public Service Commission will measure the progress of electric companies and will report the progress every two years.

The bill also changes the name of the Missouri Ethanol and Other Renewable Fuel Sources Commission to the Missouri Alternative Fuels Commission. The goals of the commission are to promote and educate the public on alternative fuels. The legislation also requires 70 percent of state fleet vehicles to be flexible fuel vehicles.

Another new law created this week will strengthen penalties for those selling controlled substances in or around parks. SB 198 makes it a Class A felony to distribute a controlled substance within 1,000 feet of a public or state park. Fishing, hunting, trapping or retrieving wildlife on private land without permission has become a Class B misdemeanor under the new law. Individuals could also lose fishing or hunting licenses for a year in such instances.

Senate Bill 384 changes the procedure when license plates are reported stolen. The bill, which went to the governor this week, changes the regulations in order to receive free plates after an individual reports their license plates stolen. Under the new law, in order to receive two free tabs from the Department of Revenue, one needs to provide a notarized affidavit along with a police report. License plates issued after January 1, 2009 would only need to provide a police report.

Friday marked the final day of the First Regular Session of the 94<sup>th</sup> Missouri General Assembly. Lawmakers convene again in 2008 for the Second Regular Session of the 94<sup>th</sup> Missouri General Assembly.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: [delbertscott@senate.mo.gov](mailto:delbertscott@senate.mo.gov).

*Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.*