



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
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# Honoring Our Veterans

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JEFFERSON CITY – I hope everyone took a moment over the holiday weekend to reflect on the military service of the men and women who answered the call to duty and protected the freedoms we so often take for granted. Memorial Day is much more than the beginning of summer vacation – it is a time to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of America.

Ours is a nation whose independence was won by those in the armed services. And ours is a nation whose freedoms have been continually protected ever since by the brave men and women serving our country.

One can look to the history books to get a sense of the enormous debt we as free people owe those we send off to war. But perhaps no better lesson serves than to turn on the evening news or read the day's paper. Right here, today, thousands of American men and women are defending the tenets of democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan and a host of other hotspots around the globe.

Missouri lawmakers certainly recognize and appreciate the sacrifices made by those who volunteer to serve their country. Each year a number of bills are introduced dealing with veterans and veterans' affairs, and this year three of those bills were delivered to the governor.

House Bills 654 and 938 include the Stolen Valor Act, which makes it a crime to knowingly misrepresent yourself as a veteran or as a medal recipient. Those who falsely claim to have served or to have received a commendation for military service dishonor the true heroes of our military.

The legislation also exempts all property of a veterans' organization with a congressional charter from real and personal property taxes. The bill also increases the amount of matching grants to be awarded each year for veterans' service officer programs by the Missouri Veterans Commission from \$750,000 to \$1 million.

Senate Bill 433 deals with unemployment compensation for veterans in the global war on terror. Under the bill, members of the Missouri National Guard or U.S. Reservists from Missouri who are laid off from their jobs back home while deployed or laid off within one month after completion of their deployment are eligible for unemployment benefits. This act also increases the penalties against employers who take adverse employment actions against veterans, such as firing or demoting, from \$25,000 to \$35,000.

Finally, Senate Bill 272 allows licensed interpreters, clinical perfusionists, dietitians, massage therapists, interior designers, acupuncturists, occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, tattooists, body piercers, and branders to renew a license expiring while they are serving in the military, within 60 days from completing their service.

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.*