



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of November 19, 2007**

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Pre-filing Bills

JEFFERSON CITY – With Thanksgiving behind us and Christmas just around the corner, we are reminded that we are in the midst of one of the greatest seasons of the year. In addition to all of the activities of this time of the year, the change in seasons reminds me how quickly the summer has passed and how soon another legislative session will begin in Jefferson City.

Unlike the U.S. Congress, which meets nearly year-round, the Missouri General Assembly is truly a citizen legislature. We convene in early January each year and adjourn in mid-May. We are generally in session from Monday through Thursday, although some weeks we may have session on Friday or even on the weekends if legislative business is especially pressing.

In preparation for the beginning of the legislative session in January, Missouri Senate rules allow members to pre-file bills on December 1st. By custom, each member of the senate, beginning with the most senior member, picks their top three priority bills and they are each assigned a number. Conventional wisdom holds that bills that are pre-filed and get a low number are more likely to pass, though passing bills is more art than science, so there's no guarantee.

This year I will be pre-filing several bills, and I'll talk more about them in this column over the next few weeks, but let me briefly mention some of my priorities for the 2008 session.

In many rural areas of Missouri, where it can be difficult to find a hospital or a doctor, advanced practice nurses often handle the routine health care needs of local citizens. I plan to sponsor legislation giving advance practice nurses greater authority to dispense medications and other controlled substances, as long as certain conditions are met.

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I also plan to sponsor a bill modifying the education requirements for Highway Patrol members and radio personnel. In an effort to expand the pool of eligible applicants in law enforcement, my bill would allow those who have completed a high school program of education or obtained a General Education Development (GED) certificate to apply to the patrol.

Finally, I will reintroduce legislation prohibiting individuals from setting a fire in an area proclaimed by the governor to be in extraordinary danger due to drought conditions. This bill also would allow political subdivisions and volunteer fire protection districts to try to recover the costs associated with responding to a fire of this nature.

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.state.mo.us

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