



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
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Increasing Opportunities for Missourians to Protect and Serve

JEFFERSON CITY – As I mentioned in last week’s column, Senators are beginning to pre-file legislation for the 2008 legislative session with the Secretary of the Senate. Legislation passed by the 1971 General Assembly allows for the preintroduction of bills beginning December 1 prior to the opening of the legislative session and continuing up to the first day of session.

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 by the Secretary. Typically, 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. Sometimes it takes more than one bite at the apple to see a bill to fruition.

That’s the case with a bill I sponsored last year to increase the pool of eligible applicants to the Missouri Highway Patrol as well as local police and sheriff’s departments. The measure modifies the educational requirements for Highway Patrol members and radio personnel. It also requires the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission to establish these same educational requirements as part of the minimum standards for basic training of peace officers.

Basically, this measure changes state law to allow students who have been home-schooled or who attended a private religious school the same opportunities to work in law enforcement. Applicants who have obtained a General Educational Development (GED) certificate also are eligible to work in law enforcement.

Missouri citizens who did not attend or complete their education at a public high school should not be prohibited from serving their communities or their state as peace officers, as long as they obtain equivalent educational certification.

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.