



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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# Sen. Kevin Engler Urges Senate to Make Judges Non-Partisan

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JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. Kevin Engler, R-Farmington, presented his bill allowing circuit court judges to run without having a political affiliation yesterday (2/18) to the Senate Elections committee. SB 757 would require that all circuit court judges run in a non-partisan election, similar to that of municipal elections, during the August primary.

“It doesn’t make sense that we expect judges to be impartial on the bench, but elect them in a partisan way,” said Sen. Engler. “This bill would ensure that judges are elected based on their experience and knowledge, not on their political affiliation.”

In Missouri, there are four counties and the City of St. Louis that select judges under the Missouri Court Plan. Sen. Engler’s legislation requires for all other circuits that elections of judges be non-partisan. All appellate judges are already elected under the non-partisan plan, but SB 757 would specify the requirement for such candidates to avoid party affiliation.

Under SB 757, beginning on January 1, 2010, elections for circuit and associate circuit judges would be held the same day as primary elections. The names of the candidates would be included on primary ballots for both parties, but the individuals would have no party affiliation. The bill also includes a provision that would prevent candidates from participating in political activities or having a direct or indirect party affiliation.

“We trust our judges to make impartial and fair rulings based on the law and the facts,” said Sen. Engler. “Requiring them to be a Republican or Democrat puts their ability to be impartial into question.”

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