



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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Engler Criticizes Waste of Money in Contract Bid During Budget Debate

JEFFERSON CITY –During debate over the state budget, Sen. Kevin Engler, R-Farmington, criticized the Missouri Office of Administration for wasting over one million dollars of the state's money over the next five years by awarding a contract bid to a company from The Netherlands when a produce company exists right here in Missouri that could do the same job for a lower price.

"I cannot believe the blatant disregard for good government that the Office of Administration has shown in this process. This is not a responsible use of state money" said Engler. "I can't stand idly by and watch Missouri's money go to foreign big business."

The contract in question is for fruits and vegetables provided to the Missouri Department of Corrections. Several months ago, Proffer Produce from Park Hills, MO submitted a bid to the state at one million dollars cheaper than its closest competitor. The Office of Administration ignored that Proffer Produce buys everything but bananas from inside the country while U.S. Foods, based in the Netherlands, imports a large number of their products from overseas. One criticism of Proffer Produce was that they do not have the production capability to serve the department. However, everyday they serve 14 states in the Midwest and employ 125 local residents and in order to carry out this contract they would have hired nearly 30 more employees.

Others shared in Engler's disappointment, House Majority Floor Leader Steve Tilley, R-Perryville, was informed of the situation and had the following to say. "I'm disappointed with the decision of the Office of Administration," Tilley said. "One important way to promote economic development in the state is to utilize Missouri companies. Proffer Produce would have created jobs in the state and saved the taxpayers over \$1 million."

Engler will request an investigation into the issue from the Joint Committee on Legislative Research and Fiscal Oversight.