



MISSOURI SENATE

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For Immediate Release:
February 26, 2008

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Sen. Smith Advances Bill Shielding Landlords from Eviction-Related Liability

Jefferson City – A bill presented by state Senator Jeff Smith, D-St. Louis, that would provide protection for landlords from loss or damages to abandoned tenant property following court-ordered evictions received first-round approval from the Missouri Senate this week.

Senate Bill 781 would exempt property owners from liability for losses or damages while removing a tenant's household goods, furnishings, or any other personal property in order to clear out rental property following a legally-ordered eviction. The proposal also would allow any property owned by a third party left at the rental property to be recovered within five business days of notification. If the property is unclaimed, landlords would then be allowed to dispose of it without liability for loss or damage.

“If a tenant fails to pay rent for months on end or destroys property, well-meaning landlords are often put between a rock and a hard place following an eviction order,” Sen. Smith said. “They can be held responsible for hauling away the possessions themselves or they can get cited by the city if they place the tenant's belongings on the street.”

Sen. Smith's concern for landlords began in St. Louis, where city ordinance holds landlords accountable for personal property left on the curb once tenants are evicted. He cited his own experience helping to manage rental property while attending graduate school.

“The legal process of eviction can take nine months or more of non-payments,” Sen. Smith said. “This legislation will help ease the burden of landlords who often find it very costly to remove discarded items left by evicted renters while working to restore their rental property to good condition.”