



# SENATOR MATT BARTLE

**District 8** – Capitol Building, Room 319 Jefferson City, MO 65101

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## **Putting an End to Steroids in Our Schools**

JEFFERSON CITY — Americans love sports and rooting for the hometown team. Unfortunately, 2007 was a tough year for the professional sporting world, which was rocked by news of steroids scandals. While it came to a head recently, this scandal has been purportedly going on for years and threatens to tear apart the very core of what we've always believed to be at the heart of athletics – the thrill of true and fair competition.

What's worse, this epidemic is no longer only among professional athletes. The use of anabolic steroids in our schools has reached unacceptable levels and we can't stick our heads in the sand any longer. In 2005, a study by the Centers for Disease Control found that nearly five percent of high school students have used steroids at least once. Another study showed that just below two percent of all eighth-graders have tried steroids. According to the St. Louis Cardinals' former trainer (who testified in Jefferson City this week in favor of the legislation), the fastest growing group of kids using steroids is teenage girls.

Our children are emulating some of their sports heroes. They see their favorite athletes out-performing their opponents with a physique that appears to be superhuman. It's fair to say that these kids are not aware of the profound health risks associated with steroids and that they don't understand that in the long run, steroids can leave a young person with stunted growth. Testimony given in my committee this week even highlighted the tragic story of one student athlete using steroids whose life was prematurely ended.

To help curtail this dangerous trend among our youth, I've introduced Senate Bill 736. This measure sets up random testing of high-school athletes who participate in post-season play for the unlawful use of a controlled substance, including, anabolic steroids.

Steroids don't just affect those who use them. They shortchange kids who are trying to achieve their goals the old-fashioned way — through hard work. They also affect the loved ones of a student athlete who may be witness to extreme behavioral changes and physical side-effects that can have devastating consequences. Missouri needs to address this problem now, before more kids are harmed by the use of these dangerous substances.

If you have any comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.mo.gov](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov) or by phone at (888) 711-9278. My web address is <http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle>.