



SENATOR MATT BARTLE

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

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2008 Legislative Session Winds Down

When the gavel slams down on the Senate podium at 6 p.m. this Friday, the 2008 legislative session will be one for the history books. At that time, any bill that still has not been passed in the identical form by both the Missouri House of Representatives and the Missouri Senate will be automatically dead and will need to be revived next year for a chance at passage. Of the more than 1,700 bills proposed this session, only a small percentage will have been passed by the Legislature and sent to the governor for his approval by the time we adjourn for the year.

In the coming weeks, I will highlight some of the most important pieces of legislation to be delivered to the governor this session. We have debated a wide variety of issues and while fewer bills were passed this session than during a typical year, many important topics were addressed. It is important to note that a legislative session should not be judged by the volume of bills passed. Sometimes victories are measured by bills that were prevented from passage.

One of the important pieces of legislation we passed was [Senate Bill 830](#). This bill encourages veterans to attend college. Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars risked their lives to protect Americans and rebuild important strategic partners in the Middle-East. This bill is a small way we can say “thank you” to Missouri veterans by helping to make the goal of pursuing higher education less of a financial burden. Senate Bill 830 reduces tuition rates by limiting the amount a Missouri public university or college may charge to certain combat veterans to no more than \$50 per credit hour for programs where the student will eventually earn a certificate, or an associate or bachelor’s degree. For veterans to be eligible to participate in the program, they must have served in combat after September 11, 2001, been Missouri residents when they first entered the military, and been discharged from their service under honorable conditions. Veterans with lowered tuition rates must also maintain at least a cumulative 2.5 GPA during their time in school.

At the time of this writing it is too early to tell whether many bills still awaiting final votes will clear the last hurdle by 6 p.m. on Friday. Several bills still have a realistic shot at passing, even if it happens to be at the last minute. By next week the dust will have settled and we’ll have a better idea what bills the Missouri General Assembly will be forwarding on to Governor Blunt for his approval.

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 or by phone at (888) 711-9278. My web address is <http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle>.

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