



Gibbons Capitol Report
May 2, 2008

Helping Local Law Enforcement

Earlier this year, I had a chance to talk with most of Missouri's sheriffs. These men and their deputies work everyday enforcing state laws in our counties to keep us safe. Most days, that means they're working alone, making split-second decisions with backup miles away. They have a thankless job that doesn't pay well, but they never waver from what they've been elected to do - protect the people. That's why when they ask for assistance, we work hard to help them.

Paying Our Deputies

Even America's Toughest Sheriff can't do it alone. Sheriffs rely on deputies who put their lives on the line. Unfortunately, most local sheriffs' hands are tied when it comes to increasing pay for their deputies. Operating costs for services and inmates are mandated and little is left over for salaries. That's why the Senate advanced Senate Bill 935 in February. Deputies deserve better pay for the work they do to protect our families and communities so we worked together to create a funding source for their salaries. An additional \$10 service fee will be charged for summons and court orders. That money then goes into the "Deputy Sheriff Salary Supplementation Fund" that can only be used to increase deputy sheriffs' salaries.

Unfortunately, after passing the Senate, the bill has still not been scheduled for a public hearing in the House. That's why we amended a House bill that dealt with officer training to include the deputy sheriffs' salary plan. The amended House bill passed the Senate this week and we sent it to the House. We are hopeful that we will succeed.

Combating Meth

We've cut meth production nearly in half by funding local law enforcement and requiring record logs for drugs sold over the counter used in meth, but meth production is again on the rise. We want to protect our children and families from the crime and harm this dangerous drug causes. That's why we stepped in and funded MoSMART in an emergency budget, when Congress let the funding lapse. We approved almost \$1.9 million to support these anti-meth task forces, making sure that 48 sheriff's officers and drug task force employees around Missouri continue to work to bust meth labs and stop those selling and using meth in our neighborhoods and communities. We're also working on legislation to make current drug logs electronic so we can track in real-time people buying over the counter meds from multiple sources used for making meth.

Jail House Blues

Local jails house state incarcerated prisoners. The state reimburses them for this, but not enough. Last year we increased the daily reimbursement rate meaning sheriffs received an additional \$1.875 million a year to house state inmates. This year we increased the reimbursement rate from \$21.25 to \$22 per prisoner per day, totaling an additional \$1.125 million. This extra funding frees up local funds to better pay deputy sheriffs and provide other security services for citizens.

Missouri families deserve to be safe and secure in their homes and neighborhoods, towns and farms. Our county sheriffs are the first line in making that a reality. As we work to help provide them the tools they need to succeed, remember to thank them for the work they do to protect our loved ones and way of life.