



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

For the Week of:
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Critical Funding for Sheriff's Deputies Passes the Senate

There are few things rural residents expect from government. They include great schools, decent roads, and adequate law enforcement when needed.

Missouri lawmakers are making headway in meeting the state's law enforcement needs by providing adequate funding for sheriff's deputies. More and more good men are leaving sheriff's departments and their communities, for a salary that adequately supports them and their families.

A special Senate interim committee was formed and spent many months hearing testimony from sheriffs and deputies throughout 2007. Senate Bill 935 was introduced in the Senate in mid January based on those recommendations. With much discussion and debate, it was passed on February 19th and is now awaiting debate in the House. I am proud that the senate was able to deliberate the recommendations and come to a conclusion on this bill without letting politics get in the way of public security.

I am a fiscal conservative. However, this additional funding for deputies without a tax increase will provide for safer communities with well-trained and experienced law enforcement. I am also pleased to have such a good working relationships with the deputies and sheriff's throughout our area that have contacted me and provided their input on this legislation.

Senate Bill 935 would create the "Deputy Sheriff Salary Supplementation Fund." As written, a sheriff's office would receive an additional \$10 fee for service of any summons, writ, subpoena, or other court order. The money received by that sheriff's office would be handled by the county treasurer and then would go onto the state treasurer's office.

Then, the money would be deposited into the "Deputy Sheriff Salary Supplementation Fund." That money would only be used for supplementing salaries and benefits of sheriff's deputies. And, that is the only use for the money. Folks tend to wonder about things when the government is in charge of taking care of money. We are making sure the fund will not be used to take care of unseen expenses. It is for paying sheriff's deputies and nothing else. The actual fund would be administered by the Missouri Sheriff Methamphetamine Relief Task Force (MoSMART) and the Missouri Department of Public Safety.

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I cannot tell you how overdue this is. We hear everyday about things like meth use, drunk driving, and other crimes in more rural parts of counties. The people who stop these crimes, investigate them, and put the bad guys behind bars are the ones we are trying to help.

As I said earlier, many sheriffs' departments are becoming training grounds for deputies. They will come to a department and only work there for a short period of time. Once they have the training they need, they tend to move on. A lot of departments are short staffed because of this. I know of a few sheriffs who work in counties that cannot afford to hire more than one or two deputies in areas so broad it takes 30 or more minutes to get from one end to the other. In an emergency situation, those minutes add up. If there were more deputies in those counties, the response time could be cut down to five or 10 minutes. The "Deputy Sheriff Salary Supplementation Fund" could save lives.

I would really love to see our friends in the Missouri House debate and pass Senate Bill 935 as quickly as we did in the Senate and get it to the governor's desk as soon as possible.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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