



Senator
Bill Stouffer

DISTRICT 21

Senator Bill Stouffer – Cultivating Rural Missouri.

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The Stouffer Report: What's on Your Ballot, Part 2

People are starting to pay attention to the “smaller” items on their November 4th ballot. I outlined one of those last week and I want to mention more about it before providing information about more of your ballot.

[Proposition B](#) is being presented as a move to improve health care for Missouri's elderly, which sounds like a good idea, but there is more to it than just that. Good or bad, Proposition B is being pushed by the [Service Employees International Union](#) (SEIU) and related groups.

What you will not see on your ballot is Proposition B's initial purpose, which is to set up a statewide collective bargaining unit for workers in the in-home services program and ease creating mandatory dues for any workers funded by the program. Passing Proposition B would also set a 10 percent threshold of workers requesting a vote to unionize instead of the usual 30 percent. Plus, paying the union's administrative expenses would fall to the state. Our Secretary of State helps finalize language for these types of ballot issues — making her position a powerful one in our Democratic processes.

You will also see two constitutional amendments on the ballot on November 4th. [Amendment 1](#) was born of House Joint Resolution 7 from last year's legislature. You may remember this stemmed from some early discussions on illegal immigration in 2007. Simply put, Amendment 1 says a “yes” vote will amend the Missouri Constitution to add a statement that English shall be the language of all governmental meetings at which any public business is discussed, decided, or public policy is formulated. This includes meetings conducted in person or by other means of communication including conference calls, video conference, Internet chat, or Internet message board.

Amendment 4 comes from [Senate Joint Resolution 45](#). I supported this resolution in the legislature. Voting "yes" on Amendment 4 would amend the Missouri Constitution to change the provisions relating to the financing of stormwater control projects via a 1998 program that only effects Missouri's 17 largest counties.

The [Missouri Department of Natural Resources](#) (DNR) wants the change for three reasons. First, the current constitutional language dictates that bonds must be offered in a combination 50% grant and 50% loan. The amendment would eliminate this requirement, adding flexibility and efficiency in delivering these funds to the first class counties involved.

Secondly, the IRS now requires tax exempt bonds be fully spent within three years of the sale, a requirement the existing program can not meet.

Finally, the amendment would allow the state to re-offer unused funds to eligible applicants, eliminating a mandated reserve for an unresponsive county and ensuring the bond funds are fully utilized.

Passage of this amendment could save state government as much as \$7,500 on any given bond issue; and local governments could stand to recoup savings as well. It is also good to note is this proposal does not raise taxes.

Next week, I will have a look at the judges who will be up for retention. You can also get more information on the November ballot by logging onto [The Secretary of State's](#) web site.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

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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