



# MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Jason Crowell  
27<sup>th</sup> Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 323  
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

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**Contact: Bev Schuelen**  
**(573) 751-2459**

## **Sen. Crowell Introduces Legislation Protecting Missouri Reporters and Sources**

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JEFFERSON CITY—Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, today (2/20) introduced legislation protecting journalists' confidential sources. The bill would protect reporters from being forced to reveal the identities of confidential sources or disclose unpublished or non-broadcast information until after a court considers the importance and relevancy of the information sought.

“Freedom of the press is one of the core rights on which our nation was founded, and this bill works to protect the anonymity of knowledgeable sources so that the press can continue to get important information out to the public unhindered,” Crowell said. “Reporters should not be punished by the courts for upholding their commitment to confidentiality.”

The shield law would cover any person or entity that disseminates information to the public by way of a newspaper, book, magazine, pamphlet or other periodical, radio or television broadcast, or through a news agency, wire service or news syndicate. Reporters would not have to share their source unless authorities prove all other avenues for finding the information have been exhausted or the court decides disclosure is necessary to protect the public interest.

“This bill would make sure that whistleblowers feel comfortable coming forward to the media, and information continues to flow freely.” Crowell said. “Physicians and attorneys are offered certain defenses to protect individuals when it comes to divulging sensitive information to the courts. Journalists, too, should be offered a protective shield.”

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