



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
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Bill Gives More Missourians an Opportunity to Protect and Serve

JEFFERSON CITY – At this stage in the legislative session, most of the work is occurring in committee hearing rooms in the state Capitol. Each bill is read on the Senate floor, and the Senate President Pro Tem then assigns each bill to a particular committee. The sponsor of a bill presents the proposed legislation to members of the committee, and then witnesses may testify either in favor or in opposition to the bill. After the committee hears all testimony on a bill, the members either vote to approve the bill and send it to the full floor of the Senate for debate by all 34 members, or they vote against the bill.

This week I presented Senate Bill 723 to the Senate Financial & Governmental Organizations and Elections Committee. This legislation will increase the pool of eligible applicants to the Missouri Highway Patrol as well as local police and sheriff's departments. The measure modifies the educational requirements for Highway Patrol members and radio personnel. It also requires the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission to establish these same educational requirements as part of the minimum standards for basic training of peace officers.

Basically, this measure changes state law to allow students who have been home-schooled or who attended a private religious school the same opportunities to work in law enforcement. Applicants who have obtained a General Educational Development (GED) certificate also are eligible to work in law enforcement.

Missouri citizens who did not attend or complete their education at a public high school should not be prohibited from serving their communities or their state as peace officers, as long as they obtain equivalent educational certification.

Finally, I think it is safe to say most of us were surprised when Governor Blunt announced he would not seek re-election this year. I think the state of Missouri has made a number of positive changes under the governor's leadership during the past three years. I certainly understand the challenges elected officials face in spending so much time away from home, and I commend the governor for wanting to spend more time with Melanie and their son Branch. I wish Governor Blunt and his family all the best.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us.

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.