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A Weekly Column for the
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Critical Funding for County Sheriff's Deputies Could Become a Reality

Citizens of Missouri expect several things from their government — great schools, decent roads, and adequate law enforcement when needed. Missouri lawmakers are making headway in meeting Missouri's law enforcement needs by providing adequate funding for sheriff's deputies.

More and more exceptional law enforcement officers in our district are leaving their sheriff departments as well as their communities for a salary that adequately supports them and their families. A special interim committee was created and legislation has been filed to address this very issue.

The [Senate Interim Committee on Funding for County Sheriff Offices](#) was formed back in July 2007 by the Senate President Pro Tem to review current court costs, fees, and other funding mechanisms relating to the operation of law enforcement or civil justice-related activities of county sheriff departments. The committee also studied the current compensation formula for deputy sheriffs and Missouri counties and compared compensation of deputy sheriffs across different county classifications in Missouri as well as neighboring states. The committee spent many months hearing testimony from sheriffs and deputies throughout 2007.

[Senate Bill 935](#) was also filed this legislative session to help provide funding for these important departments. With much discussion and debate, the measure was passed out of the Senate in mid-February and is now awaiting debate in the House.

The additional funding for deputies specified in Senate Bill 935 would not require a tax increase and would provide for safer communities with well-trained and experienced law enforcement. The measure would also create the "Deputy Sheriff Salary Supplementation Fund." According to the bill, a sheriff's office would receive an additional \$10 fee for service of any summons, writ, subpoena, or other court order.

This money would be deposited into the “Deputy Sheriff Salary Supplementation Fund” and would only be used for supplementing salaries and benefits for sheriff’s deputies. The actual fund would be administered by the Missouri Sheriff Methamphetamine Relief Task Force (MoSMART) and the Missouri Department of Public Safety.

Lawmakers have already sent a bill to the governor’s desk that will allocate additional funding for MoSMART. The program will receive \$1.9 million in additional funds through [House Bill 2022](#). Our state annually ranks at or near the top in methamphetamine (or meth) production among all of the states in the nation. MoSMART employs 40 narcotics officers specifically trained to investigate meth activity in Missouri.

Senate Bill 935 and House Bill 2022 go hand-in-hand. By providing county sheriff deputies adequate funding, they will stay in Missouri and help fight crimes like meth use, making our state a better and brighter place to live, work and visit. If you have questions or comments about funding for county sheriff offices 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.

