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Continuing the Fight on Meth in Missouri

Lawmakers across the state and throughout the country are in a constant battle against the war on methamphetamine, or meth. This horrific and dangerous drug is a rapidly growing concern among legislators, as well as the citizens of our state. Due to the low cost to produce the drug and the long-lasting effects, meth has gained popularity in communities throughout Missouri.

In 1995, the [Missouri State Highway Patrol](#) witnessed a 470 percent increase in meth lab seizures, which to many officials, marked the beginning of Missouri's meth problem. The amphetamine family of drugs was first introduced to the medical field in the 1930s as a nasal decongestant. The drug was also used in Japan during World War II to provide soldiers energy and to prevent sleepiness. Eventually the drug was made available to the public, and during the 1960s, meth abuse reached epidemic proportions in the United States.

Meth became a popular drug in Missouri because it could be easily produced. Makeshift labs hidden in mobile homes, warehouses, and even in hotel rooms began to pop up in rural areas, making seizures more complicated. Producing this dangerous drug seems simple because it does not require specific farming techniques, specialized equipment, or advanced technical training. Because production of the drug seems so easy, many "cooks" overlook the devastating results.

Making meth produces strong, toxic fumes which can result in devastating explosions in an unexpecting community. Meth use is also devastating to the human body, causing violent, unpredictable behavior.

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In 2005, legislation was passed in Missouri that laid the foundation for how lawmakers were to begin combating our state's growing meth problem. Meth manufacturers began having a harder time getting their hands on chemicals used to make the drug. The 2005 law ([Senate Bill 10](#)) limits the amount of some over-the-counter cold medications customers are permitted to buy and requires the medications to be distributed only by pharmacists or licensed technicians. The bill only applies to medications in tablet form containing pseudoephedrine, a chemical used to make meth. Liquid and gel-cap forms of the medication were not affected with the passage of the legislation.

This session, the General Assembly is working to pass a measure that would require stricter monitoring of the dispensing and purchasing of certain over-the-counter and prescription drugs. [Senate Bill 732](#) would go one step further than the legislation passed in 2005 set out to address meth use in Missouri. Currently, pharmacies maintain a paper log and document any transactions where the customer purchases pseudoephedrine products. Senate Bill 732 would require pharmacies to switch to an electronic, rather than written, pharmacy log and that the real-time log include the signature of the buyer, the name of the product, and the date and time of the purchase.

The Legislature must continue to evolve and create legislation to address serious issues, such as meth use in our state. By preventing individuals from buying more pseudoephedrine products than the allotted amount and carefully monitoring the amount of pseudoephedrine products purchased in our state, we can make meth more difficult to make and less likely to show up in our communities. If you have questions or comments about this legislation 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.

