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**A Weekly Column for the
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From Bill To Law — Part I

August 28 is the day when many of the bills previously signed by the governor take effect. Of the 578 Senate bills introduced during the 2008 legislative session, 61 were passed, and 58 received the governor's signature. Seventy-six House bills were also signed into law. Most of the Senate and House bills that contained an emergency clause became law upon receiving the governor's signature. In my next series of columns, I'll tell you about some of the important and beneficial measures signed into law as well as how they will affect Missourians across our state.

Among the noteworthy measures passed this year is a bill I sponsored in the Missouri Senate. [Senate Bill 724](#) gives qualified advanced practice registered nurses authority to prescribe controlled substances in schedules III, IV, and V while operating under a collaborative practice agreement — a formal written statement between the nurse and physician that establishes detailed information regarding the patient's care. My measure also contains anti-meth provisions that further limit the sale of pseudoephedrine products, a key ingredient used to make meth. Under current law, pharmacies are required to maintain a paper log and document any transactions where the customer purchases pseudoephedrine products. [Senate Bill 724](#) requires pharmacies to upgrade to an electronic, rather than written log. The act also requires individuals who want to buy pseudoephedrine products to present a state or federal government photo ID — such as a driver's license — prior to his or her purchase.

An autism bill based on recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), which was created last year to help devise a plan for how our state can improve services relating to ASD, was also signed by the governor. [Senate Bill 768](#) creates the Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders. The purpose of the commission is to advise the governor, lawmakers and state agencies, as well as develop a sweeping statewide plan for an integrated system of training, treatment and services for people of all ages with ASD.

Flags will now fly at half-staff for Missouri service men and women killed in combat. [Senate Bill 806](#) requires the U.S. and Missouri state flags to be flown at half-staff for one full day whenever a Missouri resident is killed in the line of duty during military service.

Legislation that lightens the financial burden of higher education for Missouri's combat veterans was also signed into law. [Senate Bill 830](#) limits the tuition a public Missouri university or college may charge to certain combat veterans to no more than \$50 per credit hour for programs where the student earns a certificate, an associate, or bachelor's degree. For veterans to be eligible to participate in the program, they must have served in armed combat after Sept. 11, 2001, been Missouri residents when they first entered the military, and been discharged from their service under honorable conditions.

A wide-ranging military measure, [House Bill 1678](#), has also been signed by the governor. The bill allows military families to make an easier transition when they move to Missouri from other states. Children of military families will be able to enter Missouri schools more seamlessly and military spouses who are teachers will be able to receive a provisional teaching license. [House Bill 1678](#) also establishes a tuition grant program for spouses and children of war veterans who die, or who become 80 percent disabled, as the result of injury or illness sustained while serving in combat.

The [Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority](#) (MOHELA) will now be allowed to expand its student loan offerings and originate federal Stafford loans under [Senate Bill 967](#). Currently, MOHELA is one of the only state-based student loan lending institutions in the country that does not originate, or serve as the original funding source for federally guaranteed Stafford loans.

Alternative teacher certification for professionals is now a possibility in Missouri. [Senate Bill 1066](#) creates an alternative teacher certification process where an individual may be certified in Missouri by receiving certification from the [American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence](#) (ABCTE). The individual must verify the ability to work with children by completing 60 contract hours in the classroom. Certification through ABCTE does not grant state certification in the areas of early childhood education, elementary education or special education.

In my upcoming legislative column, I will inform you about additional measures that have been signed into law. If you have questions or comments about the legislation above or would like to know about other measures that have been signed into law, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.mo.gov.

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

