



March 14, 2008

We are two months into the legislative session and we have already made significant headway on our top priorities for the year. The Senate passed my [SB 765](#), which repeals last year's controversial village law, and the bill is now in the House for similar consideration.

Several sessions ago, I co-wrote and co-sponsored the S.T.O.P. Meth act, which, combined with the hard work of law enforcement officials, reduced meth labs in our state by approximately 50%. This week, the Senate passed another bill that I co-sponsored to further that effort through more effective use of available technology. This bill is now on its way to the House of Representatives for their consideration.

Another of my top priorities for the session is [SB 767](#), a measure that offers relief to Missouri's overextended public defender system. In many areas of our state, unmanageable caseloads are overwhelming the state's public defender system, and this is slowing the administration of justice. This problem is prolonging the suffering of crime victims who must continue reliving their trauma throughout a prolonged trial process before hardworking prosecutors can obtain a conviction. The problem also creates a significantly increased risk of convictions being overturned on appeal, which could allow guilty people to remain in society, posing a further threat to the original victims and all law abiding Missourians. The Senate Judiciary Committee, on which I serve as vice chair, passed SB 767 last week and it is now ready to be heard by the entire Senate.

Last week in the Seniors, Families and Public Health Committee meeting, we voted to pass [SB 990](#), which increases from \$30 to \$50 the amount of money our seniors living in nursing homes and receiving benefits can have on hand. While this allowance is still very modest, it will help meet some of the basic personal needs not provided by the care facility, such as haircuts, reading materials, etc. This bill is now ready to be heard by the full Senate.

Yesterday, the Senate gave a first round approval vote to agricultural legislation that included my farm mentoring and education bill, which will provide classroom instruction to new farmers, offering business and technological information that will benefit new farmers facing the additional challenges of agriculture in the twenty-first century. In addition, the program will include a mentoring program, pairing younger farmers with their more experienced, successful counterparts. Both of these strategies have proven to be highly successful and a real asset to new farmers in our pilot program and in other states. This bill must receive one more Senate vote before going to the House.

As always, I welcome your ideas, questions and concerns about Missouri government. You may contact me at the Capitol as follows: (573) 751-2234, jack.goodman@senate.mo.gov or by writing to Senator Jack Goodman, Missouri State Capitol, Room 331A, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

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