



Senator Kevin Engler

Capitol Report

Majority Floor Leader

3rd District

*Senator Kevin Engler proudly represents the people of
Carter, Iron, Reynolds, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve,
Washington counties and part of Jefferson County*

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Week of March 23, 2009

Bills Progress through the Legislative Process

We returned from mid-session recess this week, and it is certainly good to be back. We wasted no time getting to work and stayed busy this week with several pieces of legislation, advancing some through the legislative process and sending the bills on to the House for similar consideration.

One bill receiving some time on the Senate floor was [SB 264](#), which addresses the issue of abortion. The measure would expand the state's current informed consent laws by requiring that women considering an abortion be presented with new printed and video materials detailing the risk of the procedure. Included would be information about the unborn child's development at different stages. Unfortunately, our debate on this bill ended in a stall tactic. One of the reasons the minority party chose to drag out debate with a filibuster for this pro-life legislation is to protect the governor—who is known to side with pro-choice advocates—from having to veto the bill. I hope that we are able to make these life-protecting reforms in the future, regardless of political posturing.

[Senate Bill 291](#) is an omnibus education bill that we debated into early Thursday morning before giving it first-round approval. Along with allowing school districts to offer virtual courses, the bill makes sure the money derived from the passage of Proposition A last November will go to students in Missouri classrooms. The bill fixes an error in the proposition language by directing the gaming funds generated from the removal of loss limits

to be deposited into the Classroom Trust Fund and distributed to school districts through the fund. It also allows for the creation of the “P-20 Council,” as a private, not-for-profit corporation on behalf of the state. The purpose of the P-20 Council is to create a more efficient and effective education system to more adequately prepare students for entering the workforce. I also successfully amended this bill to include a provision requiring that any additional federal education dollars that come to Missouri from the federal stimulus act for building repairs to be awarded on a “per student” basis—based a school’s average daily attendance.

We briefly discussed the jobs bill, [SB 45](#), this week. As I have stated before, it is important that we pass an economic development bill this session, but it must be a bill that will actually be effective. This is why we are taking our time and not rushing the bill carelessly through the Legislature only to see unintended consequences down the road. We are also using this as an opportunity to reform Missouri’s tax credit policy, which has significantly loosened in recent years.

[Senate Bill 167](#) also received initial approval from the Senate. The bill would require most health carriers to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism for individuals up to age 18. The bill would also restrict health carriers from refusing to issue or renew coverage based solely on the fact that an individual is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. The legislation takes an important step to help the many families in Missouri that are struggling with autism.

If you are planning a trip to Jefferson City in the near future, do not hesitate to contact my office. You may reach me at 573-751-3455, send your e-mails to kevin.engler@senate.mo.gov or write to me at the Missouri Senate, State Capitol, Room 331, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

If you know anyone who would like to receive these updates electronically, please [send me](#) an email.

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