



MISSOURI SENATE

Joe Keaveny
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JEFFERSON CITY

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**For Immediate Release:
December 1, 2009**

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Senator Keaveny Files Legislation to Return Local Control to St. Louis Police Force

JEFFERSON CITY — Senator Joe Keaveny, D-St. Louis, today filed legislation to return control of the St. Louis Police Department to local officials. The bill would allow the City of St. Louis to control its police force without state intervention through the passage of an ordinance.

The St. Louis Police Department is currently controlled by the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners. Four of the five commissioners are appointed by the governor and the fifth member of the board is the Mayor of St. Louis. This arrangement dates back to the Civil War when tensions between pro-Union St. Louis officials and pro-Confederate state officials led to the governor taking control of the city's police force.

"In 1861 the governor took control of the police department during the Civil War; now it is time for the state to give it back," Sen. Keaveny said. "While the justifications for that action are debatable, there is simply no reason for state officials to continue to exert control over the St. Louis Police Department."

The St. Louis Police Department was established in 1808, just five years after the establishment of St. Louis. St. Louis and Kansas City are the only two cities of their size that have state-controlled police departments. Most other American cities have locally-controlled and citizen-influenced processes to select their municipal police boards or commissions.

"I look forward to working with other members of the St. Louis legislative delegation and the City of St. Louis to find a solution that will achieve our goal of ending this odd arrangement and returning control of the St. Louis Police Department to the people of St. Louis," Sen. Keaveny said.

Sen. Keaveny said his bill would not alter the current police pension system for members of the St. Louis Police Department, which will continue to be governed by state statute.

In preparation for the beginning of the legislative session in January, Missouri Senate rules allow members to pre-file bills beginning July 1st with official numbering beginning on December 1st. By custom, each member of the senate, beginning with the most senior member, picks their top three priority bills and they are each assigned a number. Conventional wisdom holds that bills that are pre-filed and get a low number are more likely to be debated on the Senate floor.

Sen. Keaveny says the four issues he plans to focus on in the Missouri Senate include local control, public education reform, public transportation and tax credits.

The Second Regular Session of the 95th Missouri General Assembly convenes on Wednesday, January 6, 2010.

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