



Senator Matt Bartle – Serving Jackson County

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Keeping Missouri Tough on Crime

Missouri is known for taking a no-nonsense approach to crime and the criminals who commit offenses against its citizens. It has been the policy of the legislature for many years that a person who commits the crime should do the time. This session, I am sponsoring a comprehensive crime bill that addresses certain areas where as a state we can update our criminal law while improving the administration of justice.

[Senate Bill 261](#) was brought up for discussion on the Senate floor this week. It covers a wide-range of issues. Among these is a requirement that certain criminals serve a mandatory minimum of 85 percent of their sentence. The problem with the current system is that neither prosecutors nor victims really know how long a perpetrator will be in prison. This change to the law would bring about truth in sentencing.

Another provision in the bill prohibits certain sex offenders from volunteering as athletic coaches on teams with children younger than 17. Individuals who have committed crimes against our children should not be allowed to coach Little League teams or take on a role that requires them to be in close contact with children.

The legislation also targets cattle rustlers. While many people might assume cattle rustling disappeared in the 1800s, unfortunately only the methods have changed. Rustlers with a large livestock trailer in one night can do serious damage to a rancher trying to make a living raising cattle.

On a separate but related note, a bill I am sponsoring that relates to adult businesses was also debated a bit last week on the Senate floor. For years, I have worked to bring common-sense regulations to the smut shops that line our major highways and litter our

communities, big and small. Some of the regulations contained in the bill include prohibiting these businesses from locating within 1,000 feet of certain places, such as schools and churches. It also prohibits businesses from operating between the hours of midnight and 5:00 a.m., and has various provisions designed to protect public health.

The proliferation of smut shops in Missouri does have consequences. These establishments are an eyesore and expose children to influences parents might want to—but cannot—avoid since they are prominently placed with large, gaudy signage. They can also negatively affect property values. It is time we address this issue and protect our communities from the negative impact of these businesses.

If you have any comments or questions about this week’s column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov or by phone at (888) 711-9278. My web address is <http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle>.

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