



Senator Matt Bartle – Serving Jackson County

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Mid-Session Review

This week the General Assembly stands adjourned for its annual mid-session recess, giving lawmakers another eight weeks to work on legislation until the end of the 2009 legislative session. When we return to the Capitol next week, we will have some of the most anticipated bills of the session on our plate including a major economic development bill that will change the way we use tax credits in the state of Missouri for a long time to come.

I have talked a lot about tax credits recently, and for good reason. We are at a point where we have the perfect opportunity to initiate serious reforms, and the apparent vehicle for these reforms is [Senate Bill 45](#). In its original form, the measure, disguised as an “economic development” bill, drastically expanded the state’s tax credit programs. After much revision, the most recent version brought to the Senate floor alters the majority of the tax incentives in existence by instituting a spending cap and a sunset date. This will allow us to gain control of the tax credits that have been recklessly issued in recent years—most often for special interests—and determine which ones are actually working and which are not.

I look forward to debating this bill on the floor in the coming weeks, and I am pleased that rather than hastily rushing into passing an economic stimulus bill—as Washington did—we are instead looking at saving taxpayer dollars and using this opportunity to enact real spending reform.

The General Assembly has not taken up a comprehensive crime bill in quite some time, but this is the year we are turning our attention to many of the issues we need to

resolve in this area. I am sponsoring [SB 261](#), which contains several provisions relating to crime, such as prohibiting the use of falsified diplomas; creating an absolute defense for those protecting themselves against dog attacks; prohibiting excessive alcohol consumption on Missouri rivers; creating stiffer penalties for cattle rustling; enhancing penalties for stealing and lengthening the time that authorities can bring a case against suspected arsonists. The bill has been brought up for debate several times on the floor, but because of the wide-ranging nature of the legislation, it will likely take a bit longer to reach a consensus. We will continue to refine SB 261 in the coming weeks.

Another bill I expect to debate very soon on the Senate floor would expand the current informed consent requirements for an abortion to include the presentation of a variety of new videos and printed material detailing the risks of an abortion and providing information about the pain caused to an unborn child during an abortion procedure. [Senate Bill 264](#) would also provide the woman an opportunity to see her child on an ultrasound and listen to the baby's heartbeat. This measure is a step in the right direction for protecting the sanctity of all human life.

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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