



Senator Matt Bartle – Serving Jackson County

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Legislative Process Continues After Session Ends

Now that the legislative session is over and all passed bills have been sent to the governor, the next step is for him to sign the bills into law—or if he chooses, to use his veto power. The governor has until July 14 this year to either sign or veto each bill; if he doesn't lend his signature to any piece of legislation by the deadline, it automatically becomes law. The governor's vetoes, if any, will be considered by the Legislature when we reconvene for veto session in mid-September. A two-thirds majority vote in both chambers is required to override a veto.

Most of the passed bills that are signed by the governor become law on August 28, though some contain "emergency clauses." Any bill or provision attached to an emergency clause may take effect immediately upon receiving the governor's signature (or at another specified date).

This year, the Legislature passed 162 bills and two joint resolutions (both of these are proposed constitutional amendments that must be approved by voters to become law) out of the more than 1,800 bills and joint resolutions introduced. On paper, it may look as though not very much legislation passed, but these numbers are typical. The quantity of bills sent to the governor's desk should never determine the success of a legislative session. In fact, the success of a legislative session might be better judged by the amount of bad public policy that is blocked—not by the sheer volume of bills that pass. Also, the number of bills passed is somewhat deceptive because the substance of many bills (minus their unique bill numbers) is often amended onto other bills.

One of the measures that passed in the closing minutes of the session was [HB 481](#), a

comprehensive bill dealing with Missouri's courts.

A small sample of the provisions contained in this bill include:

- Allowing a judge to take any reasonable action necessary to prevent an international abduction of a child by a parent.
- Bringing Missouri into compliance with the Uniform Child Custody Act.
- Allowing the Highway Patrol to test the DNA samples of certain individuals determined to be sexual predators to try to link them to other crimes.
- Changing the age of "adult" from 18 to 17 for purposes of the adult abuse statute to help protect 17-year-olds who are being abused—possibly by an older boyfriend.

It is important that we keep our statutes up to date. By passing HB 481, we are helping Missouri's courts work efficiently and effectively in administering justice.

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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