



Senator Matt Bartle – Serving Jackson County

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More Bills Signed into Law as Deadline Nears

With a July 14 deadline looming for the governor to either sign or veto the bills recently passed by the Legislature, it's no surprise that the governor's pen has been using more ink in the last few days. One bill that received his signature was a wide-ranging transportation measure that in one way or another, affects most Missourians. [House Bill 683](#) officially became law July 1.

One provision in the bill addresses the oft-bemoaned safety inspections required by the state on all cars. Under the new law, the grace period for the safety inspection of new vehicles increases to five years from the vehicle's manufacture date—previously a safety inspection was required after only two years. This short grace period didn't really make any sense given modern auto safety standards. Now we have changed the law to grant a much more reasonable five years.

Another portion of HB 683 holds those with commercial driver's licenses more accountable for the operation of their vehicles. This includes less tolerance for alcohol-related driving offenses. Under the new law, even for a first offense a person will be disqualified from driving a commercial motor vehicle for at least one year.

And finally, the new law limits the amount of money a city may make off speeding fines. Missouri's crackdown on speed traps began many years ago when a law was passed to address one particular town's notorious revenue-raising practices. This town gained national attention for being one of the top speed traps in the country. The law stated that no more than 45 percent of a city's total revenue can come from traffic violation fines (the excess must be sent to the Department of Revenue for distribution to schools in the county). House Bill 683 lowers the cap to 35 percent—helping to reduce the incentive even further for some municipalities to fund the city budget on the backs of passing

motorists.

This week the governor also signed two bills I handled in the Senate, the first of which ([HB 177](#)) will allow the court to use its discretion in naming the identity of a victim (with input from the victim). This was needed because a lawyer, accused of physically abusing his wife, argued that his name—as the perpetrator—couldn't be released under a Missouri law that requires that the victim's identity be shielded. He successfully argued that if the victim's husband's name (his own) was released, it would necessarily identify her. Twisted as this logic was, the court was compelled to agree and so we had to change the law to give the court more flexibility.

The second, [HB 652](#), revises the definition of certified mail to make sure that the state can use the cheapest rates available, such as the US Postal Service. This is one of those quirks that needed to be ironed out by an act of the Legislature to save taxpayers potentially thousands of dollars. Now that the governor has signed both of these bills, they officially become law August 28.

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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