



Senator Matt Bartle – Serving Jackson County

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Veto Session Brings Lawmakers Back to Jefferson City

This week the halls of the Capitol were once again full of lawmakers as the Legislature returned to Jefferson City for the annual veto session on Sept. 16. A September veto session is required by the state constitution if the governor vetoes any bills passed by the General Assembly during the year's regular session, which ends in May.

With 12 Senate bills, 11 House bills and line items in 11 budget bills receiving the governor's veto, lawmakers gathered to consider these measures and decide whether or not to attempt to overturn a veto. Ultimately, no overrides were attempted. This is a typical course of action for a veto session and it is an unlikely event for the Legislature to vote to overturn a governor's veto. The last time it happened was back in 2003, when lawmakers voted to override three vetoes, effectively allowing Missourians to carry concealed weapons, barring certain lawsuits against gun manufacturers and requiring a waiting period for abortions.

Although actual overrides are rare, it is important to have an opportunity to meet and discuss any of the governor's actions on bills passed during the regular session because it ensures that the Legislature—which represents the people's interests—has a final say in how laws are crafted. This helps preserve the critical balance of power established by the framers of our United States Constitution, which has been wisely followed by the 50 states as they crafted their own constitutions.

A two-thirds majority vote from both chambers is required to override a veto. In contrast, initial passage of any bill requires only a simple majority. Although it is difficult

to get the votes needed for an override, if an issue rises to the level where most lawmakers feel strongly enough to counter a veto, it is certainly not impossible as illustrated six years ago.

To see a complete list of bills vetoed by the governor, please visit the Missouri Senate's website (www.senate.mo.gov), click on "Session Information" on the left side of the page, and then select the link titled "Governor's Action on Truly Agreed Bills."

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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Contact Information

Capitol Office
State Capitol Building
Room 319
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Website:
<http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle>

Phone Number:
888.711.9278 (toll-free)
573.751.1464

Fax:
573.751.8442