



Senator Matt Bartle – Serving Jackson County

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Protecting Communities from Smut Shops

It's almost impossible not to notice the proliferation of adult businesses across Missouri. Just along I-70 alone, a multitude of smut shops exist in plain view of anyone driving along the highway. These purveyors of pornography—who care only for lining their pockets—have no regard for the negative consequences they bring to the surrounding communities.

One of my top priorities for the upcoming legislative session is to clean up our state's image and make Missouri an even better place to raise a family. One way we'll accomplish this is by imposing some common-sense regulations on the operation of these establishments.

These businesses have many negative effects. They hurt local property values, as well as our image as a family-friendly vacation destination. With tourism being such a huge industry for our state (estimates are that travel accounted for more than \$12 billion for Missouri's economy in 2008 and helped employ 300,000 people), we cannot afford for our reputation as a great place for families to be tarnished as visitors drive along our roads and see largely unregulated smut shops at nearly every exit. It is time these businesses be reined in with proper restrictions on their operations.

The negative consequences from adult businesses existing in our communities are not imaginary. Too often they also offer an environment for serious crime. For example, last year, a man—a former girls' softball coach—was sentenced to nearly 22 years in prison after he took his 14-year-old step-daughter across state lines—from Kansas to Missouri—to a sexual establishment to engage in prostitution. The abuse lasted for three years.

The negative effects of adult businesses include personal and property crimes, prostitution and sexual exploitation. Because lawmakers are interested in protecting

Missourians from these very things, I have filed [Senate Bill 586](#), which would restrict the time, place and manner in which these establishments can operate. For too long, sexually oriented businesses have sprung up with very little oversight. It is time that the Legislature move forward to clean up these establishments and give law enforcement and health officials the necessary tools they need to protect the public from their detrimental influences.

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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