



Column For Week of: March 2, 2009

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## Legislation Benefitting the 16<sup>th</sup> District

March 1<sup>st</sup> marked the Senate's official deadline for filing legislation. This session a total of 576 Senate bills were introduced, but this does not mean that the majority of these bills will become law. During the 2008 legislative session, for example, only 32 percent of the bills filed in the Senate were approved by the Legislature. It's often said that the fewer bills that see the light of day, the better, and I tend to agree. So, operating under the premise that the lawmaking process is more about the quality and impact of legislation instead of sheer volume, the bills I advance serve a specific purpose that will ultimately help you, my constituents. Here are some of the bills I have sponsored this year:

### **Taking Care of Children and Families**

A bill I sponsored this session works to improve the foster care system in our state. [Senate Bill 388](#) includes a measure allowing employees of the Children's Division of the Department of Social Services to care for children in the system and creates an online application and training process for those wanting to become a licensed foster or pre-adoptive home. Other stipulations in the legislation address children's right to express their feelings about potential placement or adoption and specifies the actions that need to be taken if an employee of the children's division or licensed child placement agency knowingly provides incorrect information to a foster parent or prospective adoptive parent.

### **Supporting Rural Traditions**

This year, we were approached by members of the localities in the 16<sup>th</sup> District about a common fundraiser in our rural communities. These citizens wanted to continue holding tractor parades, which are organized by non-profit organizations such as Future

Farmers of America (FFA). These events are a great way to show support for agriculture, but community members needed a way to legally hold the parades. This is why I filed [Senate Bill 293](#), which ensures this pastime is legal and safe by allowing licensed drivers to assemble tractors and parade down Missouri roads for fundraisers as long as they have approval from the highway patrol. Without this legislation, Missouri law would not contain a provision allowing for these parades, and I want to ensure this rural tradition continues. This bill was passed out of the Senate this week and now moves to the House.

### **Encouraging Dairy Production**

Last week, I discussed [Senate Bill 254](#) or the Show-Me Milk Stabilization Act, which would create a state income and corporate franchise tax credit for milk production. The bill would help to give milk producers a safety net to encourage them to stay in business. It works by providing a tax credit that is equal to their base amount, which we hope will stop the rapid decline in production we have seen in recent years.

### **Personal Property Rights**

[Senate Bill 398](#) would change provisions currently in place for those wanting to prohibit trespassers from their private property. Right now, property owners may post purple marks on trees or posts around an area in order to delineate their property. My legislation would also allow property owners to cap posts, giving property owners another way to let others know which area is their land. Provisions in the legislation make sure that these marks will be visible and noticeable to individuals approaching the area.

### **Transient Guest Tax**

Local officials from the district approached me this year to request the authority to put an issue on the ballot. [Senate Bill 276](#), for Montgomery County, and [Senate Bill 387](#), for the City of Waynesville, would allow these entities to ask voters to approve a tax on hotel rooms sold in the area. In Waynesville, the revenues from the tax would be used to fund the construction, maintenance, and repair of a multipurpose conference and convention center. In Montgomery County, the additional dollars would go towards promoting tourism in the county.

As is the nature of the legislative process, some of these measures could be rolled into other pieces of legislation. I will keep you up to date on these and other legislation that will benefit the 16<sup>th</sup> District and all of Missouri.

## **Contact Me**

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to call me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2108. You can also write to the address listed below.

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