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## Legislative Highlights from the Missouri Senate – Week of April 27, 2009

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Dear friends:

As we enter the final two weeks of the General Assembly, our focus shifts to passing the Missouri budget legislation, which constitutionally must be completed by May 8 of this year, and concentrating on getting as many pieces of legislation through the pipeline that we can in the time we have remaining. As the close of the session draws near, many pieces of legislation that were set aside for one reason or another have come back for debate, although many of those will never make it through in time for session's end.

One of my pieces of legislation, [Senate Bill 202](#), has passed the Senate and House and now goes to the governor's desk for his signature. This bill will prevent insurance claims adjusters from assigning fault to a driver involved in an accident simply because he/she was operating a motorcycle in an otherwise legal fashion. The fact that motorcycle drivers are often penalized for simply driving a motorcycle dates back to a time when motorcyclists were seen in a different light by society in general, and this bill levels the playing field for responsible drivers of the two-wheeled vehicles.

A comprehensive crime bill, [Senate Bill 261](#), is also making its way through the legislative process. The bill addresses a great many issues relating to crime and punishment, and revises some outdated and archaic laws that have been on the books for decades, but are no longer viable in modern society. One example of an outdated law is a provision requiring that prosecuting attorneys be charged for court costs if a defendant charged with trespassing is acquitted. The law was enacted in 1909, and was passed to prevent frivolous trespassing charges against feuding neighbors. In the modern world, this law is unnecessary.

Among other provisions, the crime bill also covers issues such as outlawing the alcohol "vaporizers" which are designed to deliver alcohol to the brain quickly through the lungs, thus bypassing the digestive system; making the use of a false diploma to gain employment

unlawful; preventing certain sexual offenders from serving as athletic coaches or trainers for sports teams whose members are 17 years of age or younger; and providing defense against prosecution for killing a dangerous dog that threatens an individual or family.

These and many other pieces of legislation are being voted on, considered and discussed as the session nears its adjournment. More information may be obtained by visiting [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov). As always, if you have questions or concerns about any issue involving the Missouri legislature, please feel free to contact my office.

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