



*Senator
Bill Stouffer*

DISTRICT 21

Senator Bill Stouffer – Cultivating Rural Missouri.

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The Stouffer Report: What Would You Do?

You may be familiar with the television program that puts hidden cameras in places and finds out what people would do in certain situations.

Here is a “for instance:” What if you had the opportunity to take a job that has good pay and benefits, and all you have to do is report to a committee you used to be in charge of?

This is not a scenario created out of thin air. It actually happened this year.

I have been co-chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight for the past few years. The other co-chairman was unable to run for another term in the Missouri House due to term limits. After losing a bid to become a state senator, he found a loophole in an old law for a new job for himself — Transportation Inspector General.

The Oversight committee added the position several years ago, when MoDOT had a different leader. The purpose of an inspector general was to keep tabs on the transportation department and report regularly to the committee. Since then, MoDOT has changed its ways and has become more accountable for its actions and the way it does things. With additional auditing, reporting and improved performance, the need for the position faded with time.

Before leaving office, the former House member got recommendations from retiring friends in leadership in both the Senate and the House and assumed the position of inspector general. There is nothing illegal or wrong with that, but it did not take long for folks to point out the fact MoDOT files the same reports an inspector general would and the job is a useless waste of taxpayer money, which is not going over well in a

down economy.

I faced the dilemma of blowing the whistle on a colleague or honoring taxpayers. I hope I will always continue to choose the latter. My decision to stop this politician from taking this position was not based on bias or personal agenda, I just felt it was important to do what is right, even if no one was watching or cared.

After bad press and encouragement from the committee, the person has resigned the position, but not before I filed [Senate Bill 31](#), which would eliminate the inspector general's job from the Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight completely and save the state thousands of dollars a year for a job that is not needed.

While I hold transportation in high regard, I also am against needless spending. It does not matter if the economy is red hot or in a recession, lawmakers have an obligation to spend money wisely. When a Transportation Inspector General was created, it was because of a lack of oversight in transportation, but those days are long gone. And I want that job to be long gone, too.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

Contact Information

Capitol Office
State Capitol
Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

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

Toll-Free Phone Number:
866.768.3987

Phone Number:
573.751.1507
Fax:
573.751.9764

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