



Senator
Bill Stouffer

DISTRICT 21

Senator Bill Stouffer – Cultivating Rural Missouri.

[Website](#) | [Contact Me](#) | [Newsroom](#)

The Stouffer Report: We Are Halfway to the Finish Line

We have reached the halfway point in the Missouri Legislature, but we still have a lot of work left to do between now and May 15.

The 10 weeks that made up the first half of the legislative session went by quickly. In that time, we swore new members into the Senate, elected new leadership, formed committees and started hearing bills. Over 500 bills have been introduced in the Senate this year and many of those not only have received a hearing in a committee but have also been debated by the full Senate.

Since January 7, we have also spent time talking about the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#), which you probably know better as the federal stimulus plan. Missouri has the distinction of being the first state in the nation to start using this money. We put the paperwork together and broke ground as soon as the president signed this bill in February. As I have said before, we have to use this funding carefully. As long as one-time money is used for one-time spending, I see no reason why Missouri cannot take advantage of it. Some of this funding has strings attached that would require us to change some laws. Other money would start programs we would not be able to sustain after 2010. This is the part of the plan I am against, even if it means giving up some of the money.

We have had some successes so far this legislative year. The Senate passed [Senate Bill 31](#), which would eliminate the position of Transportation Inspector General. The job is no longer needed, since the [Missouri Department of Transportation](#) does a better job of policing itself than it did when the inspector general job was created several years ago. [Senate Bill 58](#) has gained a preliminary vote from the Senate. This is a proposal that addresses some outdated laws related to transportation that, I feel, cleans up some outdated ways of doing

things. [Senate Bill 88](#) would get abandoned cars off the roads within 10 hours, whether they are on an urban or rural road. And [Senate Bill 313](#) would create two funds to hold money from the federal stimulus package and make it easier for everybody to see how much money we have and where specifically it is going.

In the second half of the session, the budget will become our priority. There are 13 bills that comprise the actual state budget. The budget starts in the [Missouri House](#) and then comes to the Senate. We have a hefty task ahead of us this year. We have been able to offset the expected losses in state revenue for the remainder of the current fiscal year, which will end on June 30. While some folks want to use an expected \$800 million in federal stimulus dollars to shore up the 2010 budget, some of us think that is a mistake. That is why we are looking at every program and doing everything to make the best use of taxpayer dollars. The less of the federal funding we *have* to have, the better.

With only a couple of months remaining, we have our work cut out for us. Rest assured, we will use every minute we have to make decisions that help put people back to work and make rural Missouri stronger than ever before.

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
--	--	---

[Click here](#) to unsubscribe.

*Serving Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette,
Macon, Ray, Saline, and Parts of Clay County.*