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## **Sen. Crowell Announces Delay in Proposed Educator Retirement Benefit Changes** *Work to Permanently Reverse Ruling Continues*

JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. Jason Crowell (R-Cape Girardeau) today urged Missouri’s Congressional Delegation to continue work to encourage the Social Security Administration (SSA) to permanently reverse a recent reinterpretation of retirement benefits received by educators. The SSA has decided to delay changes proposed in November, which may affect some certified school district employees.

“I am pleased that the SSA took the complaints coming from Southeast Missouri seriously, and decided to delay action on this radical reinterpretation of long-standing retirement benefit policy,” said Sen. Crowell. “But, we still need to remain vigilant and work to get this decision permanently reversed.”

Sen. Crowell, the Missouri Congressional Delegation, and school officials have been fighting the proposed changes since they were announced. The SSA has now decided that the new regulations will not go into effect on the previously decided implementation date of July 1, 2009.

Most school districts signed their agreements with SSA prior to 1984, and these agreements specifically outlined the positions that were excluded from paying Social Security withholdings. In 1984, Missouri changed the statutory definition of “teachers” and “employee” to include more school district employees in the Public School Retirement system. The SSA’s recent interpretation is that this 1984 change in law is not retroactive, and that any districts that signed their Section 218 Agreement before the change in law have to follow the definitions that were in effect at the time of the agreement’s enactment. Since 1956, PSRS members have been excluded from Social Security withholding requirements.

More details on the proposed changes, such as information on the determination of who may be affected, could be more specific after the 60-day evaluation that the SSA is currently conducting. However, the changes are sure to not affect those who are in the position of teacher, teacher-secretary, substitute teacher, supervisor, principal, supervising principal, superintendent, assistant superintendent, counselor, nurse or librarian.

“The only fair resolution for this issue will be for the SSA to decide not to implement these changes,” said Sen. Crowell. “Our certified educators have earned their retirement benefits by dedicating themselves to the students in Missouri, and I will continue to fight for them.”

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