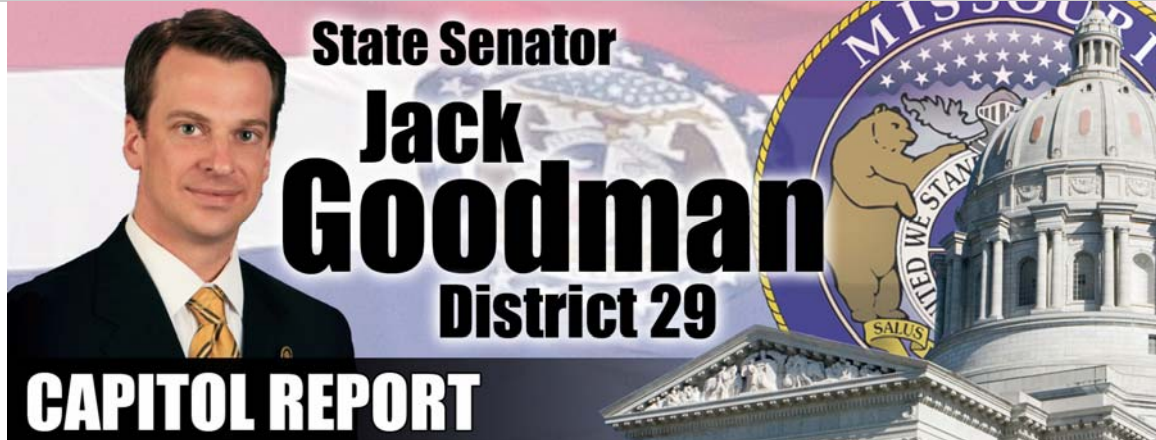


May 1, 2009



Senator Jack Goodman – Serving Barry, Lawrence, McDonald, Ozark, Stone and Taney Counties

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[Promoting Fire Safety](#)

A terrible fire this week in an Aurora apartment building left eight families with no place to live and virtually no belongings — all because a discarded cigarette was not fully extinguished. The blaze started early Sunday morning and it took nearly three dozen firefighters to completely extinguish the fire over a period of three hours.

The devastating effect of this fire on the tenants of the eight units that were destroyed will likely continue for months down the road. Thankfully, no one was injured or killed, but the fire displaced all of the residents from their homes and destroyed most of their belongings. Only two of the families living in the building had renters' insurance.

This unfortunate incident right here in the 29th Senatorial District makes the passage of [House Bill 205](#) this week particularly timely. The legislation, which is the House's version of my [Senate Bill 220](#), prohibits the sale of any cigarette in Missouri that has not been tested, certified and marked that it has met certain safety standards. I handled HB 205 in the Senate and I am pleased to report that the bill was passed by your Senate and has now moved back to the House for a final vote.

Known as the Fire Safety Standard and Firefighter Protection Act, HB 205 requires that cigarette manufacturers meet certain safety and performance standards, including manufacturing cigarettes that are fire-safe. This type of cigarette incorporates technology that causes it to self-extinguish if left unattended, significantly reducing the risk of causing a fire. In short, these cigarettes are supposed to go out if not puffed.

Requiring all cigarettes to be fire-safe will not only help keep consumers safe, it will also protect our firefighters and preserve our firefighting resources. The Coalition for Fire-Safe Cigarettes estimates that in the U.S., cigarette-ignited home fires kill between 700 and 900 people per year, making it the leading cause of home fire fatalities. There were 30,400 smoking-material structure fires in the U.S. in 2006, illustrating that these

types of fires are not rare occurrences. Many times when the cause of a fire is undetermined, a neglected, lit cigarette is the culprit. Additionally, property losses from smoking-material fires total hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

Sadly, one-quarter of victims of smoking-material fire fatalities are not the smokers whose cigarettes started the fire — 34 percent are children of the smokers; 25 percent are neighbors or friends; 14 percent are spouses or partners; and 13 percent are parents. Taking action to implement fire-safe technology into cigarettes will protect everyone, whether smoker or non-smoker.

When this bill is enacted, Missouri will join the ranks of 43 other states that require all cigarettes sold within their borders to be fire-safe. With the ready availability of affordable and effective technology, it is time we take this step to protect Missourians from the senseless fires that can take lives and destroy homes.

As always, I welcome your ideas, questions and concerns about Missouri government. You may contact me at the Capitol as follows: (573) 751-2234, jack.goodman@senate.mo.gov or by writing to Senator Jack Goodman, Missouri State Capitol, Room 331-A, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

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