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## **Senator Keaveny Prefiles Legislation for 2011 Session to Return Local Control to St. Louis Police Force**

JEFFERSON CITY — Senator Joe Keaveny, D-St. Louis, prefiled legislation today to return control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department to local officials. The bill would allow the City of St. Louis to control its police force through the passage of a local ordinance.

The St. Louis Police Department is currently controlled by the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners. Four of the five commissioners are appointed by the governor and the fifth member of the board is the mayor of St. Louis.

“The citizens of St. Louis clearly support returning control of our police department to the local level,” Sen. Keaveny said. “On November 2, 69 percent of St. Louis voters approved Proposition L, the measure that asked voters if they want authority over the police department to return to local control. I think those results send a strong message to Missouri lawmakers that the time has come to end this antiquated arrangement.”

Senator Keaveny said his bill would not alter the current police pension system for members of the St. Louis Police Department, which will continue to be governed by state statute. The move to local control would not affect any officer benefits or residency requirements, and it would allow for collective bargaining of uniformed officers.

“I am hopeful the results of the November 2 election will be the catalyst that finally passes this important legislation so the city can start to save money and resources by combining duplicative services,” Sen. Keaveny said.

The bill is identical to legislation Sen. Keaveny filed and debated on the Senate floor during the 2010 legislative session (SB 643).

In preparation for the beginning of the legislative session in January, Missouri Senate rules allow members to prefile bills on December 1. By custom, each member of the Senate, beginning with the most senior member, picks his or her top three priority bills and they are each assigned a number. Conventional wisdom holds that bills that are prefiled and get a low number are more likely to be debated on the Senate floor.

The First Regular Session of the 96<sup>th</sup> Missouri General Assembly convenes on Wednesday, January 5, 2011.

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