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Senator Green Files Legislation Protecting Employees' Right to Privacy in the Workplace

JEFFERSON CITY — In an effort to further protect employees' right to privacy in the work place, Sen. Timothy Green, D-Spanish Lake, recently filed legislation designed to strengthen employees' privacy rights by barring employers from requiring employees to disclose user names and passwords.

[Senate Bill 610](#) specifically prohibits employers from asking or requiring employees or any person applying for employment to supply any user name or password information for any Internet or web-based account, except for information that is needed to access the employer's internal information systems.

Senator Green filed the legislation in response to a [September 2009 National Conference of State Legislatures' article](#) that highlights one city's hiring procedures. In Bozeman, Montana, job candidates have an additional step in the application process. In addition to standard criminal record checks and past employment reviews, applicants for the city must also provide their user names and passwords to popular and widely-used personal or business websites, including Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube.

"During this tough economic time, citizens have enough hurdles to jump throughout the job application process," said Sen. Green. "Not only does this requirement step beyond the right of privacy, but it is unnecessary for employers to require this information while searching for qualified candidates for any position. This legislation would take on this issue before it can even make waves in our state."

Senate Bill 610 would make it a class A misdemeanor for any employer who violates this act of privacy. Other issues Sen. Green plans to address this session include improved voting systems for elections, election judges, and strengthening child care facilities and foster homes protections.

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