

For Immediate Release

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SHARING A VIEW OF THE STATE

Issues and Comments – 33rd Senatorial District

Senator

Chuck Purgason

We will soon have an opportunity to go to our respective polling places and cast our ballots. I would like to take this chance to express my views on the ballot issues we will be voting on. No matter what your stance is on the issues, please exercise your right to vote.

There will be two Propositions on the November ballot. Propositions allow you, the voter, to make changes to the state statutes. They have no impact on the state constitution.

Let's begin our discussion of November 2 ballot issues with Proposition A.

There is no economic law or historic example to quarrel with the benefits of prosperity to society. Related descriptors include productivity, efficiency, opportunity, risk/reward, success, and achievement. Prosperity is sought, not just for its own merit, but for its pervasive, extraordinary, and overwhelmingly positive effects. Evidence as well as common sense confirms that no one benefits from poverty, and everyone benefits from prosperity.

Without exception, an examination of nations, states, or peoples confirms the link between prosperity and a clean environment, a healthy society, education, recreation, transportation, technology, convenience, and the list goes on. Too often public policy – particularly tax policy – works against the benefits of prosperity. [Prop A](#), if passed in November, will allow voters in St. Louis and Kansas City to realign with the principles of prosperity and will help protect all Missourians from local officials who might naively impose jobs-killing taxes on their earnings.

For years our two largest cities have imposed a 1% tax on the wages of individuals who live or work in their jurisdictions and on business profits. Voters functionally powerless to eliminate or modify the earnings taxes, and nothing but common sense (frequently in short supply) protects other Missouri cities and towns from politicians' propensities to take more. Passage of Prop A will not prohibit earnings taxes but will amend state statutes to require a vote of tax payers every five (5) years to continue imposing the tax. In other words, it sunsets the existing and any future taxes on earnings – hence the slogan “**Vote Yes on A – Let Voters Decide.**”

If voters reject an existing earnings tax the cities are allowed to phase it out over 10 years allowing officials to examine whether the revenues are essential and how to replace them. Kansas City and St. Louis need prosperity if they are to create jobs, build schools, and grow. Job-killing taxes on earnings hinder that growth, and at the very least should be subject to the vote of the peoples.

Many of us in the Missouri House were expecting the November ballot to include a vote to eliminate all state taxes on income, but that hope was thwarted by the reluctance of Speaker Richard and other members of House leadership. The Missouri Jobs and Prosperity Act now must wait another year. But the principles of Prop A are the same. It is simply bad policy to tax what we want more of – success and

prosperity. Until Missouri aligns public policy with the laws of economics and common sense, we will continue to be our own worst enemy. Let's pass Prop A in November and turn loose the power of economic prosperity.

[Proposition B](#) will be on Missourian's November 2nd ballot. No matter how it is promoted it is fundamentally the product of ignorance. It reflects ignorance about breeders, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the power of the free market, property rights, and liberty. It is being driven by propaganda rather than truth and depends on emotional appeal rather than the achievement of meaningful reform.

Advertisements supporting Prop B state that there are more than 3,000 puppy mills in our state. According to the Missouri Department of Agriculture, there are 2,813 licensed kennels in Missouri, 1,451 of those are commercial breeders. These facilities are inspected at least once a year.

Missourians love their pets and hate to see animals abused. Dog breeders, and I have met a number of them, raise dogs because they love dogs and enjoy seeing others find just the right dog for their family. The goal of these small business people is to satisfy the public's longing for pets at a cost most can afford. A single flea bite on an otherwise perfect puppy means an unacceptable price penalty along with the determination to find and fix any problem. If a puppy has anything more serious, they might just be refused. It simply does not pay to mistreat animals. But the best breeder would be hurt the most by Prop B.

Many are ignorant about the nature and objectives of [HSUS](#) – the organization behind Prop B. A visit to www.humanewatch.org or www.activistcash.com will help you assess whether their intentions have anything at all to do with the treatment of animals. HSUS's own website lists [14 executives](#) whom it is reported received \$2.5 million in 2008 in pension benefits alone; their salaries are not available. In that same year less than a half million dollars went to animal shelters (less than 0.5% of their budget).

However, most harmful is ignorance of the significance of property rights to basic American freedoms. There is no more important unalienable right that our constitution secures than that of property rights. Personal property – almost unheard of before the United States exceptional founding – is the right that guarantees all others. It is the only right that once lost will almost certainly not be restored short of armed conflict. Prop B directly assaults property rights and for that reason alone is completely unacceptable and should be ruled unconstitutional. But the courts aside, no issue is important enough to concede to government our last defense against its abuse of the people.

Dispelling ignorance about what is actually in Prop B will help defeat it at the ballot box. First of all, the use of the word "cruelty" is to invoke prejudice, not reason. For example, keeping 51 dogs is cruel but keeping 50 is not; keeping a dog in a 5' by 5' 11" enclosure is cruel while adding one inch to the length makes it kind; kennel temperature of 45 degrees F is kind while 44 degrees is cruel. "Cruelty" is not for the dog; it is for the emotional appeal. We're told Prop B is for "large-scale" breeders, but just 11 female dogs makes you a "large-scale" breeder, and your animal quarters will have to be heated and air conditioned. Finally, if Prop B is about animal cruelty then why are hunting dogs excluded from the regulations?

Proposition B is not about animals or about cruelty, it is an assault on property rights, small businesses, and the free market. It employs a proven strategy for stripping rights from the people and empowering the elitists: 1) find an innocent lovable party - **puppy**, 2) make them a victim with an emotion-stirring label - **puppy mill**, 3) make "more government" the solution – **Prop B**. If voters take a broader and thoughtful perspective and if they insist that freedoms be protected and that policies be logical rather than emotional, then American ideals will win, and Prop B will fail in November.

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