

*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*



*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEMENT

Senator Shields Comments on Federal Judge's Ruling Ending Peaceful Funeral Measure for Fallen Soldiers

*Federal Judge Overturns 2006 Law
Entailing Reasonable Restrictions on Funeral Protests*

"In 2006, we passed a law banning the picketing and protesting of funeral services. The law passed swiftly with broad support because no one wanted to see a repetition of the protest led by members of the Westboro Baptist Church at the funeral of Edward Lee Myers, a specialist with the U.S. Army who was killed in action in 2005.

Specialist Myers died while serving his country during his second tour of duty in Iraq. Whatever the pretext of this protest, the setting and delivery served to infringe upon his rights and the rights of those left behind to deal with the tragic loss, including his wife, their two children and countless other family members and friends — none of whom should have been forced to endure this behavior during a service of final rest.

Therefore, we passed [Senate Bill 578](#), making it illegal for people to picket or otherwise protest near any church, cemetery or funeral home within an hour prior to a funeral service, and until an hour following the ceremony's end. A complimentary law established a distance of 300 feet. The law made every day that a violation occurs a separate misdemeanor offense.

Unfortunately, Judge Gaitan's ruling means that those laid to rest will no longer have the right to be mourned and remembered in an environment of peace, respect and compassion. This ruling is a tragedy to those who die in service while protecting the rights we enjoy here at home."

-Senate President Pro Tem Charlie Shields
34th Senatorial District

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