Feb. 21, 1907

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was Feb. 21, 1907, the day a smallpox outbreak could have led to ending the legislative session.

The outbreak had quickly spread through Missouri. It is thought someone who lived in and worked in Jefferson City had contracted the virus during a visit to St. Louis. Within a few days, there were between 38 and 52 cases of smallpox in the Capitol City. Just one day prior to this, a resolution was adopted, asking the State Board of Health to work to keep smallpox from spreading further.

At the same time, a number of lawmakers also left the Capitol City, but sources vary as to whether smallpox was the sole reason. In any event, the First Regular Session of the 44th General Assembly looked to be in peril. According the Missouri Senate Journal, by Feb. 18, four senators were absent and one was out sick. By Feb. 20, only one senator was absent with leave and another senator out sick. On Feb. 21, the journal shows one absent senator, one absent with leave and one senator sick.

Otherwise, it was a standard Thursday. Missouri senators would adjourn under the rules and return at 10 the next morning. At the same time, the governor had refused to close the Capitol and end session, since this had not happened since the Civil War.

February 21, 1907, the date marking continuing spread of smallpox throughout Jefferson City, on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Source: [Missouri Legislative Library](https://www.senate.mo.gov/LegislativeLibrary/Timeline.html))