



## Legislative Column for the Week of Feb. 12

Greetings,

As the state legislature's upper chamber, the Missouri Senate is designed to foster a slow, deliberative process of lawmaking. This is necessary to ensure all bills passed by the Senate are carefully vetted and reviewed before becoming law. If a proposal is controversial, a minority of senators — or sometimes, even a single senator — can use different mechanisms to stall or block its passage. Because of the power even a small number of members can have, the Senate rules effectively promote moderation by making compromise the easiest path to getting things done. If a happy medium can't be found, it's harder for everyone.

Last week, this process was on full display as a bipartisan group of senators led a multi-day filibuster against [Senate Bill 564](#). The bill establishes new rate increase caps for public utilities in Missouri, as well as several other changes to the Public Service Commission's regulatory framework.

Under Senate rules, any senator can hold the floor for endless debate on a bill. When this is done to prevent a bill from coming to a vote, it's called a filibuster. After more than 24 hours of debate, in which the filibustering senators refused to end floor discussion on the bill, a compromise was finally reached. Some of the rate increase caps in the bill are now slightly lower than originally planned, among other changes. The Senate gave preliminary approval to the legislation Thursday, Feb. 8, and will likely vote soon on whether to send the bill to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

So why was Senate Bill 564 so controversial? The general idea behind the bill has been circulating in the Missouri Senate for years, but past filibusters have kept it from ever coming to a final vote.

Supporters of Senate Bill 564, including Ameren Corp., a St. Louis-based utility giant, believe the measure is in the best interest of consumers, because it makes their utility costs more consistent between billing periods. Some proponents believe the legislation is also a job creator that would boost Missouri's economy in certain areas. One of the main promises of the proposal is that utility companies have said its passage would free them to revamp an increasingly outdated electrical grid.

Opponents, on the other hand, think the bill is a state-sponsored giveaway to multi-million-dollar companies with virtual monopolies on the utility business. The Public Service Commission, they argue, is a vital regulator of these companies, and Senate Bill 564 hinders its ability to protect consumers. The fact that Ameren itself favors the bill is evidence it works primarily in the company's interest, not the consumers', they say.

In the end, neither side received exactly what it wanted — a sign of a good compromise. Now the Missouri Senate has come to an agreement, our body can focus its attention on other problems facing the state, such as balancing the budget and finding more funding for education and infrastructure. There's much more work to be done in 2018, and our legislative session still has months to go.

Below, you will find a chart tracking the progress of every bill I have sponsored in the 2018 legislative session. These proposals are important to Missourians of all backgrounds. I look forward to discussing each and every one of them before the Missouri Senate.

### **Sen. Curls' Sponsored Legislation for 2018**

<b><u>Bill Number</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Status</u></b>
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 779</a></u></b>	Modifies provisions of law relating to long-term care certificates of need.	Second read and referred to Senate Health and Pensions Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 780</a></u></b>	Allows certain people to enter abandoned property to secure it, remove trash and graffiti and maintain the grounds, and provides immunity from civil and criminal liability.	Hearing conducted in Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 781</a></u></b>	Establishes notice procedures for potential adverse action against a State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts licensee who is delinquent on state taxes or has failed to file state income tax returns in the last three years.	Second read and referred to Senate Professional Registration Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 787</a></u></b>	Establishes the Missouri Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.	Voted do pass by Senate Agriculture, Food Production and Outdoor Resources Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 855</a></u></b>	Requires the State Board of Education to assign classification designations to charter schools in the same manner as school districts are assigned such designations.	Second read and referred to Senate Education Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 856</a></u></b>	Modifies provisions relating to the Public School Retirement System of Kansas City.	Second read and referred to Senate Health and Pensions Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 857</a></u></b>	Modifies provisions of law relating to the placement of children.	Second read and referred to Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 858</a></u></b>	Modifies provisions of law relating to investigations of child abuse or neglect.	Second read and referred to Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 930</a></u></b>	Modifies provisions of law relating to guardians ad litem.	Second read and referred to Senate Seniors, Families and Children Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 954</a></u></b>	Allows individuals found guilty of certain offenses of unlawful use of a weapon to expunge records relating to such offense.	Hearing conducted in Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Bill 965</a></u></b>	Modifies provisions relating to the "Hand-Up Program" and child care subsidies.	Second read and referred to Senate Seniors, Families and Children Committee.
<b><u><a href="#">Senate Joint Resolution 32</a></u></b>	Requires certain statewide elected officials, members of the General Assembly, and	Second read and referred to Senate Rules,

	judges to receive cost-of-living adjustments if such adjustments are provided to all state employees.	Joint Rules, Resolutions and Ethics Committee.
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Please know I value your input, and I invite you to visit my Capitol office if you are ever in Jefferson City. You may access my Senate website at [senate.mo.gov/curls](http://senate.mo.gov/curls).

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