## CAPITOL OFFICE

State Capitol
201 West Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, MO 65101-6806
Tele: (573) 751-1347
(800) 752-8256
Fax: (573) 522-9179
E-Mail:
mike.parson@house.mo.gov

Rules Committee Chair



District Coordinator Rachel Lightfoot

Home Address 940 N. Redel Place Bolivar, MO 65613

## MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MICHAEL L. PARSON State Representative District 133

## A Time for Agriculture to Unite

Let's make two things very clear from the outset of this article: (1) I am strongly opposed to the illegal operation of "puppy mills" anywhere but particularly in Missouri; and (2) I am as equally opposed to outside organizations trying to impose their concepts of animal treatment on our Missouri agricultural communities.

I am, and will remain a strong advocate of the free enterprise concept and believe that the majority of our businesses operate within the laws and regulations of our great State. Agriculture, and the offshoots of it, will continue to be a significant part of the livelihood of our citizens. We will, and we must, continue to have agricultural operations that provide the food to feed our people. We will also have those operations that provide animals for the pleasure and sport of our people. Our people who are involved in these operations are honest, hard-working people and have a work ethic that is commendable to all occupations. Just a few short years ago almost one-half of our people had an agricultural background, today that number is less than two percent. Is it any wonder that so many of our voting citizens do not understand what is being proposed?

I recognize there are many requests and demands made on our farming operators but I am asking each of you to take the time to familiarize yourselves with the proposed ballot measure against dog breeders which could appear on the November ballot. This issue is being pushed by a well organized, well financed, and well publicized outside group, The Humane Society of the United States. PLEASE do not confuse this group with your local humane society group! I am convinced your local humane society truly has the well-being of our local communities and their stray, unwanted, or abused animals as their primary function. I am a supporter of our local humane society and I truly believe these folks are dedicated and committed to a very worthy cause. My hat is off to them for the many hours they volunteer. I do not believe The Humane Society of the United States has the same goals in mind and I am confident they do not have the best interests of agriculture as one of their objectives.

When you have any group, especially an outside group, whatever banner they may run under, who attempts to control a way of life that has stood successfully for centuries, deserves the closest of scrutiny. When you have a group who wants to tell you, the professional in agriculture, how to run your operation by passing laws, beware! Missouri already has sufficient laws to address animal neglect and abuse. We do not need these outsiders trying to impose their lifestyles and their concepts on us!

It will take the concerted efforts of all of us, cattlemen, poultry, hog, horse, row-crop and yes the dog breeders, working together to defeat this very deceptive piece of legislation. Missouri farmers are without equal when it comes to being good stewards of our resources and we do not need additional restrictions that impose unrealistic burdens and requirements upon our agricultural operations. I am committed to the defeat of this amendment and hope each of you will join me in seeing it is defeated. I urge you to carefully consider the ramifications its passage could mean to agriculture and to the lifestyle of the people of Missouri.

Michael L. Parson

State Representative

District 133