

Tackett, White lobby for expansion of teenage drinking deterrent bill

By RYAN SMITH
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Cole County Prosecuting Attorney Bill Tackett and Sheriff Greg White are working together to get a provision added to proposed legislation that calls for school districts to establish new policies for students who drink on, or off, school property.

Introduced by Senate President Pro Tem Michael Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, Senate Bill 402 includes several deterrents to teenage drinking, including the possibility of teens losing their driver's licenses or being excluded from specific extra-curricular activities at school, including sports.

The Senate Monday third read and gave final approval to the legislation and it now moves to the House for consideration.

Tackett and White said they liked the bill, but pointed out that an exception would have to be made for law enforcement agen-

cies to obtain arrest records of juveniles under the age of 17 and report them to school boards. Currently, arrest records for those under 17 are protected, said Tackett.

"This component is essential to make the bill complete," said Tackett. "Otherwise, we're leaving out a critical group of kids under 17."

White called the legislation "excellent."

"It's definitely a critical issue when you're talking about our young people," said White. "We're trying to protect the individual and society."

The prosecutor and sheriff working together on underage drinking is new, says Tackett, and is part of a total effort to help curb such behavior.

"We've discussed projects we have in mind to reduce underage drinking," said Tackett. "We're on the same page and I couldn't be more pleased."

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