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## Better Protecting the Unborn, Congressional Redistricting

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***By Rob Mayer***

Throughout my legislative career, I have worked tirelessly to take steps to protect the lives of our unborn children. Last week, I presented a bill to a Senate committee that is an extension of that effort. Senate Bill 65 would change provisions relating to abortions in Missouri with respect to the viability of an unborn child. The measure amends the definition of “viability” to mean the state of fetal development when it is the physician’s judgment that there is a reasonable likelihood the life of the unborn child can still be sustained outside the mother with or without artificial life support.

As a lawmaker, I strive each and every day to provide a voice for those who do not yet have one to share. This bill would further protect unborn children that are determined to be 20 weeks or more in gestation by recognizing them as viable, preventing a physician from performing or inducing an abortion unless it is necessary to preserve the life of the mother.

At 20 weeks, a baby is approximately the length of a banana. He or she can hear sounds and even covers its ears with its hands if things are too noisy. His or her twisting, turning, punching and kicking movements can start to be felt by the mother. State law already requires mothers to be informed about their alternatives to abortion. This bill I’ve introduced goes one step further, strengthening the definition of the viability of an unborn child so he or she can have a chance to become who they were meant to be.

With the measure heard by the Senate General Laws Committee, a passing vote would recommend the bill move to the full Senate for debate.

## **Redrawing District Maps**

Late last week we also received important data from the U.S. Census Bureau that is the first step in redrawing Missouri's congressional districts. Unfortunately, Missouri's population did not grow as rapidly in the past ten years as some other states, causing us to lose a seat in Congress. That means the State Legislature must redraw Missouri's congressional district boundaries this year to represent eight seats, rather than our current nine.

This will be a difficult task, but as Senate Leader I have already named the senators comprising the Senate's Select Committee on Redistricting to begin work and I have full faith in their ability to get the job done.

The committee will hold public hearings across the state and I will keep you apprised of their work as we redraw congressional districts to ensure fair and equal representation across our state.

Please feel free to contact me throughout the year with any comments, questions, or issues using the information listed below and on my website at [www.senate.mo.gov/mayer](http://www.senate.mo.gov/mayer).

***Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, represents the 25th State Senatorial District in the Missouri State Senate and serves the state as the President Pro Tem of the State Senate.***

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