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MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

For Immediate Release:
February 12, 2009
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Sen. Eric Schmitt Sponsors Bill to Raise Awareness of Epilepsy

JEFFERSON CITY – Senator Eric Schmitt, R-Glendale, today filed legislation to raise awareness of a disorder that affects one in every 100 Missourians. The legislation would designate February 14th each year as Epilepsy Awareness Day.

“Designating February 14th as Epilepsy Awareness Day will serve as a day for us to reflect and focus on the needs of those with epilepsy,” said Sen. Schmitt. “Ten percent of the population deals with this disorder every day, and this would serve as a time to educate and promote the public about living with epilepsy.”

Epilepsy is a neurological condition that produces seizures or sudden, brief changes in how brain cells function, causing a person’s consciousness, movements or actions to be altered for a short time. There are more than 20 different types of seizures, ranging from momentary lapses of consciousness to convulsions.

Sen. Schmitt chose February 14th to designate as Epilepsy Awareness Day because St. Valentine is the patron saint of epileptics. The day would be used to promote issues important to epilepsy advocates including addressing the needs of the 30 to 50 percent of brain-injured military personnel returning from combat that could develop post-traumatic epilepsy. The special day would also call attention to the treatment, prevention, and curing of epilepsy through research and education.

“On behalf of the 58,000 Missourians with epilepsy and 580,000 who will have a seizure in their lifetimes, this is a remarkable day for all of them,” said Darla Templeton, CEO of the Epilepsy Foundation of the St. Louis Region. “There are many myths, misconceptions, and prejudices that surround epilepsy, and awareness and education are key to erasing this stigma.”

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