



Roger Meissen/Index
United States Senate member Jim Talent speaks in the city council chambers at City Hall on Sept. 2. Talent spoke about a new federal bill he is sponsoring that will combat the use of methanphetamines in the United States.

Talent talks meth

U.S. Sen. Jim Talent addresses Kirksville voters about new anti-meth bill

Jessie Gasch
Assistant News Editor

Have a cold? Better stock up on Sudafed now.

The Combat Meth Act, a federal bill sponsored by senators Jim Talent, R-Mo., and Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., among other provisions will require all drugstores to sell pseudoephedrine behind a pharmacy counter. More than 100 people from Truman and the Kirksville community crowded into the council chambers at City Hall to hear Talent speak about the bill Sept. 2.

"Uniquely with methamphetamine, the drug isn't just used and sold in our neighborhoods and communities, it's made in our neighborhoods and communities," Talent said. "We're hoping this will throttle local labs because they will not be able to get the pseudoephedrine they need ... but that does not mean it's going to throttle methamphetamine altogether."

Talent said the bill will raise the visibility of the methamphetamine epidemic. "This is the most serious drug threat I've seen in the now 20 years I've been in public life," he said. "I say that, and people nod their heads, OK, but when law enforcement says it, ... you should be scared. Because these guys and gals have seen it all."

He said the problem has been worsening dramatically in the last few years.

"Despite the heroic efforts on the local level by our sheriffs and our chiefs and our deputies and our officers, this is not a challenge that we have, by and large, been succeeding at defeating," Talent said. "Now it sounds like it's different here in Kirksville, and that's great, but we have been losing ground in most places."

Talent said the bill will set aside \$43 million for law enforcement and research purposes and reconstitute a national methamphetamine treatment

center. It also will establish a state-to-state database to be used by law enforcement officials to track purchasers of pseudoephedrine.

"The object of the bill has been to ... help in ways that law enforcement tell us they need help," he said. "We pick these guys up and put them in the county jail, and they dry out after a few days. And all the health problems the meth's been masking come to the surface, and the county's got to pay for those."

The Combat Meth Act has received broad-based bipartisan support, Talent said.

"I expected I would have senators in states where this is not yet an epidemic come up to me and say, 'Look, why should we take the equivalent of half an aisle of cold medicines behind the counter in my state where this isn't a problem?'" Talent said. "And I was going to tell them, 'It's a problem in your state, you just don't know it.' But they've not come up to me and said that."

The bill passed through the Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously and without a hearing, he said.

The Combat Meth Act contains no newly established prevention program, Talent said.

"It's our feeling that the programs are out there through which we can put the dollars," he said. "We just think of this as a funding issue. There are already federally funded DARE programs and other things. We don't want to put in a new program with fully funding the old one."

Sondra Sanford, meth specialist with Preferred Family Healthcare, said the Combat Meth Act could not be successful without a prevention component.

"We don't grow and cultivate poppies here, but has that stopped people from doing heroin?" Sanford said.

Sanford wrote a letter to Talent shortly after his visit explaining her reservations about the bill.

"[The bill] is a reactionary measure," she said. "Until they actually do something to address the issue of people having substance-abuse problems, all it will do is open up the door for foreign meth production."

In the letter, she said Mexican-manufactured meth seizures increased from 384 cases prior to Oklahoma's adoption of a behind-the-counter bill to 1,875 since then.

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Jim Talent
U.S. Senator

"I think it's noble what [Talent] wants to do, but if you want to see results, it's a proven fact you have to have four components, and one is prevention," Sanford said. "Advertising is not prevention."

Local drugstores, which will have to bear the brunt of the cost of moving precursor drugs behind

the counter, already have begun to comply with the bill's standards.

"So far, it's required a minimal amount of time and resources," said Craig Harris, co-owner of Rider Drug. "I think it is an aggressive thing to do, but sometimes drastic times call for drastic measures. Give it a year, and we'll see how the courts and the arrests are, and we'll know if it was successful."

Jeff Nelson, owner and pharmacist of Elliott Pharmacy, said although compliance would take no direct additional cost, it could hurt sales a little.

"For a lot of those products we used to sell over the counter, people might not be willing to go through the process of getting them," Nelson said. "And they have legitimate reasons during cough and cold season."

Still, the bill is a positive thing for the community, he said.

The Combat Meth Act was scheduled for debate on the Senate floor as of July 28. There is an identical bill, introduced by Rep. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., in committee in the House.

Menu changes cause price increases for campus food

Mainstreet Market raises prices on 9 percent of items

Michelle Fortner
for the Index

Students with meal plans will have to keep a closer watch on their meals and dining dollars after a few prices rose at Mainstreet Market.

The price increases vary from a few cents on some items to 40 cents on another. Dennis Markeson, director of food services, said that of about 150 items, only 14 raised in price.

Despite the increase, Markeson said that prices in Mainstreet Market are fairly stable.

"This has probably been the first time that we've increased prices in two years," Markeson said.

He also said Sodexo does a cost analysis every summer to determine what prices might need to be changed.

The main changes were at Blimpie Subs and Sal-

ads. The chicken sandwich raised 40 cents in price because of a product change. The type of chicken used changed from patties to flanks, adding to the cost of the sandwich. Sodexo then had to pass the increase on to students and others eating in Mainstreet Market.

Markeson said many of the items in Mainstreet Market are competitive with other local businesses.

"We're usually below prices from the downtown area but not by much," he said. "We try to stay competitive with the local merchants."

The price changes are small, but they could lead to bigger problems at the end of the semester. Students might not notice the increases until they begin to run out of meals and dining dollars.

But Markeson said

he does not think the increases will be a very large problem for students.

He said he recommends that those with meal plans keep track of the meals they have left.

Last semester, Sodexo workers distributed cards with approximate meal usage to students.

The cards gave an estimate of how many meals that students should have left at a certain point in the semester.

Markeson said workers will distribute the cards to students again within the next couple of weeks.

Markeson said Sodexo looked at other programs for meal tracking, but costs derailed these ideas.

One program allowed students to check their meals on a computer. This program would have cost

\$10,000 to implement and an additional \$4,000 to maintain.

Markeson said Sodexo will continue to look into other options for checking meals online.

Senior Sarah Preisinger, Dobson Hall community coordinator, said she did not notice the price increases until she went to pay for her first meal at Mainstreet Market this year. Preisinger said she realized some items that were available for one meal block last year had increased in price. She said she mainly noticed this at Blimpie.

Preisinger said she sees a problem with the increases. She said she thinks many students probably have not noticed the increases and have not taken them into account.

"I think people are going to run through their dining dollars much faster than they have in the past," Preisinger said.

She said she is unsure what other students will do when their meal plans begin to run out.

"We're usually below prices from the downtown area but not by much."

Dennis Markeson
Director of Food Services



Adam Kabins/Index
Freshman David Bulen buys food in Mainstreet Market in the Student Union Building on Tuesday. New price increases for many food items have gone into effect this semester.

"Some people, when they run out of meals at the end of the semester, they just choose to go off campus and eat fast-food or Easy Mac or 10 pounds of Ramen [Noodles]," Preisinger said. "I think some people might buy more meal blocks."

Truman students will

not only have to spend more on food but also on a few other things around campus.

This semester, the cost of laundry went up, with a 25 cent increase for both washing and drying. It now costs a dollar to wash one load of laundry and 75 cents to dry.

Also, the price to make a black-and-white copy in the library doubled from 5 cents to 10 cents.

Senior Jessica Tipp said she does not think the price increase for copies is too bad.

"It was a little more, since it was twice as much," Tipp said.

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