

# Weird Missouri bill defines sex as a "gift" - AvvoStories

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By [Gemma Alexander](#)

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Sex has been variously described as an expression of love between two consenting adults, an act for the purpose of procreation, or maybe just a good time. But if one Missouri legislator gets his way, sex will be legally defined as a gift. Not all sex, of course—that would be weird. No, the [bill](#), proposed by Montgomery County Republican Bart Korman, applies to sexual relations between lobbyists and Missouri lawmakers.

[Bill misses the target](#)

Korman's bill would require legislators to report sexual relations with lobbyists on the gift disclosure forms they submit monthly to the Missouri Ethics Commission. There would be no penalties associated with such relations, and married couples would be exempted from reporting. The bill is therefore basically intended as a deterrent to politicians to enter into sexual relations with lobbyists, using the age-old strategy of public shaming.

The bill comes in the wake of recent scandals that have embarrassed Missouri politicians on both sides of the aisle. In both cases (Republican House Speaker [John Diehl](#) in May and Democratic Senator [Paul LeVota](#) in July), the politician was forced to resign after allegations of sexual misconduct involving interns. Neither situation would have been prevented, or even come to light sooner, had there been a law like the one Korman has proposed.

## How did conflict of interest become a gift?

Since recent events involved interns instead of lobbyists, and harassment instead of relationships, it's fair to wonder just how much of a connection actually exists. The correlation may in fact be coincidental; new House Speaker Todd Richardson has [stated](#) that ethics reform will be a top issue for the 2016 legislative session, and Korman, who himself only accepts meals and the [occasional baseball ticket](#) from lobbyists, could be responding to the Speaker's focus.

It almost does seem like a courtesy move, since he doesn't seem to have gone to much trouble working out the proposed law. On [CNN](#), Korman is quoted as saying he, "didn't want to create a larger bureaucracy or a lot of additional extra laws." Instead, he looked to anchor the new rule to existing disclosure requirements. Perhaps "the time, venue, and nature of any entertainment" category seemed like too big an invasion of privacy, leaving "gifts" as the most promising choice among existing categories of required disclosure.

He doesn't seem to want the reporting requirement to cause a lot of trouble for others, either. Fortunately for everyone, legislators will not be required to place a dollar value on the gift of sexual relations received, thus ensuring that reporting legislators will be as free from repercussions with their partners as they are with the Ethics Commission.

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