

There are concerns in the House that special interest groups may have plans to push their agendas on the livestock industry. House Agri-Business Committee Chairman Brian Munzlinger is sponsoring HB 2291; creating the Missouri Animal Care Advisory Committee, which would make recommendations to the legislature on possible policy changes in the poultry, livestock, and licensed dog breeding industries. "Seeing how they fit within the standards that our industry here actually have. We have in our livestock industry here, animal and poultry industries, they all have high standards that those commodity groups, associations encourage their members to meet," Munzlinger said. That group would consist of experts from state universities, the State Veterinarian, and representatives from various agriculture groups like the Cattlemen's Association or Pork Association. The goal is to give a single, authoritative voice to defend the agriculture industry's interests. Munzlinger says this idea is reactionary, after seeing how special interest groups affected agriculture policies in states like California and Michigan. Munzlinger says the idea for this committee, and two other bills with similar goals of protecting the livestock industry's interests, were mostly formulated in response to policy changes in other states that were initiated by special interest groups.

For those that still haven't filed their taxes, there are some important things to look out for this year as the filing deadline draws near. The I-R-S says filing online is the best approach for procrastinators. It's the way most people file these days and I-R-S spokesman Michael Devine says it's by far the most accurate, too. "The chances of making a mistake that's going to generate a notice from the IRS on an electronically prepared and e-filed return is less than 1%. If you're doing it with a pencil and paper and a calculator your chances of making a mistake on those late returns go up to about 20%," Devine said. Devine says the most common errors year in and year out are writing down the wrong social security number or putting down the wrong legal name. Using an electronic filing service is also a good idea this year because of the "Making Work Pay" tax credit and other stimulus programs. Those could amount to hundreds of dollars in credits, and most programs or professionals will find out if you're eligible. Devine says another issue for many folks when money is tight is that they can't come up with the cash to pay what they owe. "They may be tempted to say well I just won't file because I can't pay. That's the worst thing to do. The failure to file penalty is ten times larger than a failure to pay penalty," Devine said. If you still like to do things the old fashioned way with pencil and paper, Devine says you just need to remember the post office doesn't stay open until midnight on April 15th anymore.