HB 535 -- Missouri Military Family Relief Fund

Sponsor: Roorda

This bill creates the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund which
will be administered by the Adjutant General. Grants from the
fund, subject to appropriations, will be made to families of
persons who are members of the Missouri National Guard or
Missouri residents who are members of the reserves of the armed
forces of the United States and have been called to active duty
as a result of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The
Adjutant General is required to establish the eligibility
criteria.

In addition to state appropriations, in each taxable year
beginning January 1, 2005, Missouri residents and corporations
can designate a minimum contribution of $1 on a single income tax
return or $2 on a combined return to the fund from their refund
amount or by a separate payment.

The Director of the Department of Revenue is required to transfer
the contributions on a monthly basis to the State Treasurer for
deposit into the fund. Any moneys remaining in the fund at the
end of the biennium will not revert to the credit of the General
Revenue Fund.

An educational grant program is established for survivors of
veterans who died in combat while on active duty after March 1,
2003. Up to 25 grants may be given annually, with the option to
petition the General Assembly for more grants if the waiting list
exceeds 50. The grants may be used for programs at public
Missouri colleges or universities leading to a certificate,
associate, or first bachelor's degree. When combined with other
financial aid, the grants will pay for up to 100% of the tuition
and fees. The Coordinating Board for Higher Education will
administer the program. Survivors will be certified as eligible
by a state veterans service officer or a Veterans Administration
medical authority, depending on the circumstances of the
veteran's death. Surviving children are eligible to receive the
grant until the age of 25.

The provisions of the bill will expire six years from the
effective date.