

For Immediate Release
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**Missourians for Responsible Lending Leads Effort to
Cap Interest on Predatory Loans**

(Columbia, Missouri) Missourians for Responsible Lending, a new Missouri coalition of civic and faith leaders, has launched a statewide initiative petition to cap annual interest rates at 36 percent for payday and other small loans. The announcement was made today following the Secretary of State's approval of initiative petition language to be placed on the Nov. 2012 ballot.

"We are pleased that the proposal has been approved by the Secretary of State and urge Missourians with concerns about how these predatory practices hurt struggling Missouri families to join with us," Rev. Bryan said.

Bryan announced a new website, <http://moresponsiblelending.org>, and encouraged all who support payday loan reform to join the group. "Missourians have expressed deep concern over the predatory practices of the payday loan industry and other loans targeting hard-working families who are facing difficult financial challenges. As people of faith, we can no longer ignore this financial exploitation in our communities." Bryan said.

The petition places limits on payday, car title, installment and consumer credit loans, which also charge triple digit interest rates and are frequently used as ways to avoid limits placed on payday loans. The average APR for a payday loan is 445 percent, according to the Missouri Division of Finance.

Rev. Bryan joined with Communities Creating Opportunity and more than 60 religious leaders and laymen and women from denominations throughout the state to sign a covenant calling for reform measures.

"Yes, 400% interest is too high," said Reverend Jennifer Thomas of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Kansas City. "Cities, small towns, and congregations throughout Missouri are concerned about the economic drain caused by these out-of-state lenders, as well as the damage these excessive interest rates inflict on Missouri families, the elderly and those with disabilities."

Missouri law allows some of the highest interest rates of any state in the nation, and Missouri has more payday loans than almost any other state. Seventeen states have capped the rate 36%, and three of these states have approved these reforms at the ballot box. In 2010, 72% of Montana voters approved an initiative to limit the cost of payday, car title, and other high cost loans to 36%, rather than let 400% interest rates continue unabated. The 36% cap was also approved by the federal government to protect military families after the U.S. Department of Defense found that the 400% interest rate loans threatened military readiness. The rate cap for soldiers was sponsored by former Missouri Senator Jim Talent and supported by Missouri Congressman Sam Graves.