

HCS HB 1550 -- JUVENILE COURT JURISDICTION

SPONSOR: Stevenson

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 10 to 2.

This substitute expands the jurisdiction of juvenile courts to include individuals who are 17 years of age for the sole purpose of status offenses by revising the definition of "child" and "adult." "Status offense" is defined as any offense described in Section 211.031.1(2), RSMo.

Parents are allowed to petition the circuit court to extend the jurisdiction of the juvenile court over the minor child until the child reaches the age of 18 years old and makes the expiration date of these provisions subject to the effective date of the changes to Section 211.021.

The provisions of Section 211.021 become effective when spending by the state for juvenile officers and offices exceeds by \$3.8 million the amount spent by the state for juvenile officers and offices in Fiscal Year 2007.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost to General Revenue Fund of More than \$1,834,819 in FY 2009, More than \$2,293,658 in FY 2010, and More than \$2,357,405 in FY 2011. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the juvenile court currently has no jurisdiction over high school students older than 17 years of age. High school students are aware of this law and will drop out of school at age 17 despite the wishes of their parents or guardians. The bill raises the age of jurisdiction for juvenile courts to 18 years for all status offenses such as delinquency and truancy. Any juveniles between the ages of 17 and 18 will continue to be prosecuted as adults for state crimes.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Stevenson; Missouri Catholic Conference; and CNS Corporation.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that Missouri's juvenile offices are overworked and understaffed by 94 full-time employees. The estimated impact of the bill will increase caseloads for the juvenile officers by 30%. The bill will create confusion among law enforcement officers on what to do with juveniles between the age of 17 and 18 who have committed concurrent status and state crimes.

Testifying against the bill was Missouri Juvenile Justice

Association.