

HB 294 -- IMMUNITY FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

SPONSOR: Lynch

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 9 to 1. Vote "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative Oversight by a vote of 12 to 0.

This bill specifies that an individual who, in good faith, seeks medical assistance for someone who is experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose or other medical emergency, including seeking assistance for himself or herself in these instances, or if the individual is the subject of a good faith request shall not be arrested, charged, prosecuted, convicted, or have his or her property subject to civil forfeiture or otherwise be penalized for certain specified offenses if the evidence for the arrest, charge, prosecution conviction, seizure, or penalty was gained as a result of seeking medical assistance. The bill also requires any police officer who is in contact with any person who is in need of emergency medical assistance because of a drug or alcohol overdose to provide appropriate information and resources for substance-related assistance.

This bill is similar to HB 1569 (2016).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this would help reduce the number of drug and alcohol related overdoses if people are not afraid of getting in trouble if they call for help for themselves or others. A couple of witnesses testified that their children would most likely be alive today if the people with whom they used drugs would have called for help when their children were in the throes of an overdose, and those people would likely have called for help if they knew they would not get into trouble for doing so.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lynch; Chad Saboron; Jim Marshall; Kathi Arbin; Brandon Costerison, NCADA; Lisa M. Benton; and Mid-Missouri Fellowship Of Reconciliation.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.