

HCS HB 1155 -- COURT PROCEEDINGS

SPONSOR: Gregory

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill revises provisions relating to victims and witnesses by applying such provisions to victims of or witnesses to a criminal offense rather than to victims of or witnesses to offenses committed under specific chapters. The bill also amends the definition of "vulnerable person" as it relates to Section 491.075, RSMo, adds a definition for "personal information," as it relates to Section 491.630, and it adds provisions relating to the state's obligations with respect to a victim's or witness's personal information. It also adds a definition for "victim" and "witness" as those terms relate to Sections 589.660 to 589.681.

The bill specifies that an order of protection issued by a court with jurisdiction over any criminal matter shall issue such order at the time of filing in every case involving a child victim, a felony offense under Chapter 565, any offense under Chapter 566, or any offense under Chapter 573.

Finally, the bill amends provisions relating to the "Address Confidentiality Program."

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill is important because victim and witness intimidation is real, and a lot of cases remain unsolved because people fear retaliation. We need to bring our protections in line with the federal government's protections. It is incumbent upon us to make our criminal justice system friendlier to victims, especially child victims, and witnesses.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Gregory; Kim Gardner, St. Louis; and Missouri Kids First.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.