

HB 1254 -- DRUG TRAFFICKING

SPONSOR: Schroer

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 8 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill adds to the offense of trafficking drugs in the first degree knowingly distributing, delivering, manufacturing, or producing or attempting to distribute, deliver, manufacture, or produce more than 10 grams but fewer than 60 grams of fentanyl or any derivative thereof, or any mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl. If the violation involves 60 grams or more of fentanyl or any derivative thereof, or any mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, it is a class A felony. If it involves more than 10 grams but fewer than 60 grams, it is a class B felony.

The bill adds to the offense of trafficking drugs in the second degree knowingly possessing or having under one's control, purchasing or attempting to purchase, or bringing into the state more than 10 grams but fewer than 60 grams of fentanyl or any derivative thereof, or any mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl. If the violation involves 60 grams or more of fentanyl or any derivative thereof, or any mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, it is a class B felony. If it involves more than 10 grams but fewer than 60 grams, it is a class C felony.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that fentanyl used to be trafficked with other drugs, but now it's being done on its own, so it's necessary to add the drug to the trafficking statute. It's a very dangerous drug and, because of how dangerous it is, the State Highway Patrol has changed the way it does its field screening. Fentanyl does have actual medical purposes, but people are starting to abuse the drug on its own and it's becoming easier to get on the street than heroin. Even firefighters are getting severely affected just from close contact. A penny is three grams' worth, and three micrograms could kill a person. In 2016, there were 62,000 overdoses from this drug, and that's more than all the casualties from the Vietnam war.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Schroer; Missouri State Troopers Association; Missouri State Fraternal Order of Police; St. Louis Police Officers Association; Missouri State Council of Firefighters; St. Louis County Police Officers Association; and

Timothy Lohmar.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.