

HB 1344 -- PRIVATE PROBATION SERVICES

SPONSOR: Hill

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 8 to 1.

This bill requires entities providing private probation services for misdemeanor offenses to utilize the cutoff concentrations utilized by the Department of Corrections with regard to drug and alcohol screening for clients assigned to such entity. If drug presence is at or above the cutoff concentration, the drug test is positive, and, if the drug presence is below the cutoff concentration, the drug test is negative.

Additionally, the entity providing the probation services shall not require clients assigned to the entity to travel in excess of 50 miles in order to attend their regular probation meetings.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this is about preventing bad things from happening to our citizens by putting private probation on the same level as the state's testing levels. There has to be more accountability, especially when companies are profiting from keeping their clients in the system. The cutoff levels should be the same whether it's felony probation or misdemeanor probation. Additionally, it is important to not require those on probation to have to travel around the state for their five minute probation meetings, so limiting the maximum distance to 50 miles is important. The way private probation is being handled now is almost creating a modern-day debtor's prison because people are being sent to jail for not being able to pay for their testing.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hill; Jerry Swartz; Jim Durham, Enterprise Mission Assurance Support Service (EMASS); and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.