

HCS HB 1739 -- MINIMUM TERMS OF IMPRISONMENT

SPONSOR: Smith (163)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 7 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 7 to 0.

The bill specifies conditions under which a court may depart from the applicable minimum term of imprisonment.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this would allow judges to depart from mandatory minimum prison terms for low-level, non-violent offenders. This is important because we have an overpopulation issue in our prisons, and that is unsustainable. This will go a long way to bring proportionality to low-level, non-violent offenses. We need to do a better job of separating the people we're mad at from the people we're afraid of. The language of the legislation is based on model language, which states have been able to modify to meet their individual needs. If we don't pass this legislation, we have big costs ahead of us because we will need to build more prisons.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Smith; Molly Gill, Families Against Mandatory Minimums; Missouri State Public Defender System; Empower Missouri; and Patrick Tuohey, Show Me Institute.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.