

HB 2117 -- EYE DROPS

SPONSOR: Pfautsch

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Administrative Oversight Committee by vote of 12 to 0.

This bill states that the administration of eye drops to a newborn infant is not required if a parent or legal guardian objects to the treatment because it is against the religious beliefs of the parent or guardian. Additionally, the bill removes a provision requiring the physician, nurse, or midwife to report in writing his or her compliance with using the eye drops.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this statute, which was passed in 1909, is antiquated and needs to be updated. The statute currently requires that healthcare providers fill out paperwork after administering the eye drops. Supporters say that the paperwork serves no purpose other than to create extra work for hospital staff. Supporters also say that hospitals regularly encounter parents who are opposed to the eye drops and want the law to clarify under what circumstances the parents have a right to object to the treatment.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Pfautsch and the Missouri Hospital Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that there are some OBGYNs that feel that the eye drops are no longer necessary. Other witnesses clarified that it would be much more expensive to test all infants or birthing mothers for STDs than it would be to administer the eye drops.

Testifying on the bill were American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists-Missouri Section and America's Health Insurance Plans.