

HCS HB 2302 -- UNLAWFUL USE OF A WEAPON

SPONSOR: McGee

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 12 to 0.

This bill establishes "Blair's Law" which specifies that a person commits the crime of unlawful use of a weapon if, with criminal negligence, he or she discharges a firearm within or into the limits of any municipality. Any such person shall be guilty of a class D felony. These provisions will not apply if the firearm is discharged within exceptions listed in the bill including, but not limited to, firing the weapon in self-defense or defense of another person against an animal attack if a reasonable person would believe that deadly physical force is immediately necessary and reasonable under the circumstances.

These provisions will also not apply to or affect a person when the use of a weapon is reasonably associated with or necessary to the fulfillment of his or her official duties.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill is necessary to protect unsuspecting, law-abiding individuals in Missouri urban areas who too frequently become the accidental victims of the irresponsible use of a firearm, including 11-year old Blair Shanahan Lane, who died in 2011. Supporters say that this bill does not restrict anyone's access to firearms, it simply requires responsible gun ownership.

Testifying for the bill were Representative McGee and Michele Shanahan Demoss.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.