

HCS HB 168 -- HYPODERMIC NEEDLES

SPONSOR: Rehder

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Special Committee on Urban Issues by a vote of 7 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill exempts any entity registered with the Department of Health and Senior Services that possesses, distributes, or delivers hypodermic needles or syringes for the purpose of operating a syringe exchange program or otherwise mitigating health risks associated with unsterile injection drug use from provisions of law prohibiting the distribution, delivery, or sale of drug paraphernalia.

This bill also exempts any entity registered with the department that delivers or manufactures hypodermic needles or syringes for the purpose of operating a syringe exchange program or otherwise mitigating health risks associated with unsterile injection drug use from the provisions of law prohibiting the manufacture of drug paraphernalia.

This bill is similar to HB 1620 (2018).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that needle exchange participants are five times more likely to enter an addiction treatment program and that needle exchange does not increase drug use. Needle exchange programs help prevent serious disease outbreaks caused by needle sharing. Needle exchange programs also protect non-drug users from disease.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Rehder; Chad Sabara; David Stoecker, Missouri Recovery Network; Missouri Family Health Council; Missouri State Medical Association; Missouri Pharmacy Association; Aaron M. Laxton; Empower Missouri; Planned Parenthood Advocates in Missouri; BJC Healthcare; and Missouri Nurses Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.