

## HCS HB 749 -- TOWING TASK FORCE

SPONSOR: Tate

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Transportation by a vote of 13 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules-Administrative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 1.

This bill creates the "Towing Task Force" and includes one member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker and one member of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tem, as specified in the bill. The task force will make recommendations on overcharges, customer complaints, and the process for nonconsensual towing used by law enforcement. A report to the General Assembly must be submitted March 1, 2021, and the task force will expire on January 1, 2022.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill will help regulate overcharging in the towing industry. The heavy duty towing industry may overcharge by bringing extra equipment that may not be necessary. At times, the cost to use equipment can cost more than \$100,000. Insurance companies will only pay for a certain portion of the towing expenses. Supporters say that this bill will bring awareness to the overcharging issue. The task force outlined in the bill will give recommendations and a framework to help eliminate price gouging.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Tate; Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association; Missouri Trucker Association; Missouri Insurance Coalition; and Thomas G. Kolb, Midland Transports.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the towing industry wants to be included in the bill to educate the task force. Towing companies are not given the ramifications of the situation when they are called for a towing job. In those cases, towing companies bring equipment that may be necessary to complete the task. Those who oppose the bill say that towing bills are expensive. Some towing companies charge an hourly rate for the use of each piece of equipment and have to charge this way to afford to purchase expensive equipment to complete towing jobs. In addition, shipping and handling is getting more expensive and towing is a dangerous job. Those who oppose the bill also asked for equal representation of the task force.

Testifying against the bill were The Missouri Group; Greg Branstetter, Marshfield Towing; Jared K. Innis, Missouri Tow Truck Association; and Towing & Recovery Association of Missouri.