

HCS HB 1282 -- PRIVATE COLLEGE CAMPUS PROTECTION

SPONSOR: Justus

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 7 to 1 with 1 voting Present. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 2.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1282.

This bill establishes the "Private College Campus Protection Act". The governing board of a private college or university may employ police officers, who must take an oath of office and complete police officer training to obtain a peace officer license. Private colleges and universities may establish and enforce traffic regulations for on-campus thoroughfares.

This bill defines "private college" or "private university" for this section and includes a location description within five miles of any city of the fourth classification with more than 4,000 but fewer than 4,500 inhabitants and located in any county of the first classification with more than 50,000 but fewer than 70,000.

Currently, these provisions only apply to the College of the Ozarks.

The House Committee Substitute added a five-year sunset on the program, and it specified that the records of this police force will be subject to the same open records statutes as other police forces under Chapter 610, RSMo.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that there are 20 other states that allow private colleges to have a police department. They have tried to make it work with existing police departments in the area, but they cannot. They are concerned that the local police department's response time is 30 minutes. If there were an active shooter situation on campus, the incident would be long over with who knows how many casualties before the police would arrive. The issue of safety has become more pronounced in recent years. The college has more visitors and speakers who need security, and the college covers approximately 1,000 acres, which makes it difficult to monitor for safety. All of the college's current security officers are POST certified. There was a suggestion to put a five-

year sunset on the program to make sure it is working.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Justus; Independent Colleges And Universities of Missouri; Kurt S. McDonald; and Marvin Schoenecke.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.