

HB 1666 -- FARMERS' NUTRITION PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Stevens (46)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 11 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill allows the Department of Agriculture to apply for a grant under the US Department of Agriculture Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to allow pregnant and postpartum women to obtain food at eligible farmers' markets.

This bill is similar to HB 752 (2019).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this program would help both Missouri farmers and pregnant women and their young children to have greater access to fresh produce. The vouchers are covered by the federal government, the state only has to cover the administrative expenses, so it is a very inexpensive way to improve health and eating habits for many families.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Stevens; Missouri Nurses Association; Empower Missouri; The Penman Group - Operation Food Search; KC Healthy Kids; National Association of Social Workers - Missouri Chapter; Missouri State Alliance of YMCAs.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the Department of Agriculture is willing to administer the program with its companion that provides vouchers to senior citizens. The cost is basically for one part-time person to get the program up and running.

Testifying on the bill was the Missouri Department of Agriculture.