

HCS HB 1961 -- KEEP OUR SCHOOLS SAFE ACT

SPONSOR: Schroer

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 10 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative Oversight by a vote of 5 to 2.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1961.

This bill defines "law enforcement officer", "school protection officer", and "volunteer", and allows school districts to use volunteers as school protection officers. The bill requires anyone designated as a school protection officer to carry a concealed firearm and self defense spray.

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 by allowing for trained individuals to volunteer it would provide a transition and purpose for veterans. School resource officers are overworked and city police are often understaffed. This bill provides an opportunity to reallocate resources and helps protect our students.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Schroer and Dale Roberts.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that it strips local school boards of their discretion to determine if they want to have school protection officers armed. This bill would also create a state mandate and might increase the risk for accidental shootings. The typical school shooting isn't from someone outside of the school system but a student that gets a gun from a home without a gun safe.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri National Education Association; American Federation of Teachers-Missouri; and Cathy Gilbert, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.