

HCS HB 992 -- DOG OWNER LIABILITY

SPONSOR: Burger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention by a vote of 6 to 4.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 992.

Currently, a person who owns or possesses a dog that bites another person under certain circumstances, the owner or possessor of the dog is strictly liable for damages suffered by the bitten person. Under this bill, the owner or possessor would also be strictly liable if the dog physically injures another person under certain circumstances.

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 the purpose is to expand the current offense of keeping a dangerous dog. This adds physically injuring a person, whereas now it's just for biting. This could apply even to an aggressively friendly dog. The dog could be a danger to a person even if the dog happily jumps. Some dogs seriously injure people but nothing can be done under current law when they don't bite. There are about 500 serious dog injuries in Missouri that don't involve a bite. The vast majority of dogs don't charge directly into your wheels, and the vast majority don't even cause an accident if they do chase. This bill is geared toward the dogs that do. Local government doesn't really want to have leash laws or address this on the local level because they are worried they'll lose votes.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Burger; David A McQuinn; Jeff Cotner; Joe Crader; Kevin Harvey; Martin Priggel; Robert Uren; Soheel A. Khan; Suzanne Duplissey; Barry Bean; and Brent Hugh, Missouri Bicycle & Pedestrian Federation

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill submitted written testimony, which can be found online.

Testifying against the bill were the Missouri Federation of Animal Owners; and Arnie C. Dienoff.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on

the House website.