

HCS HB 1022 -- PROTECTION OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS

SPONSOR: Hill

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Insurance by a vote of 12 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1022.

This bill provides that any special victim, as defined by law, shall not be required to reveal any current address or place of residence except to the court when in the private chamber of a judge for the purpose of determining jurisdiction and venue. Additionally, any special victim may file a petition with the court alleging assault in any degree by using his or her identifying initials instead of his or her legal name if said petition alleges that he or she would be endangered by such disclosure (Section 565.058).

This bill creates the offense of interference with a health care facility and the offense of interference with an ambulance service. A person commits the offense of interference with a health care facility if the person acts alone or with someone else to willfully or recklessly interfere with access to or from a health care facility or willfully or recklessly commits any of the acts specified in the bill. A person commits the offense of interference with an ambulance service if the person acts alone or with someone else to willfully or recklessly interfere with access to or from an ambulance or willfully or recklessly disrupt any ambulance service by committing any of the acts specified in the bill. The offense of interfering with a health care facility or an ambulance service is a class D misdemeanor for a first offense and a class C misdemeanor for a second or subsequent offense (Sections 574.203 and 574.204).

This bill is similar to HB 1753 (2020).

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 bill will help health care workers to be in a safer work environment. Many workers are abused on the job by patients or patients' family members and many times the employer does not want the employee to press charges or call the authorities because it could look bad for the facility. This bill will help these workers get the assistance they need and prohibit them from being targeted for reporting incidences.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hill; Arnie C. Dienoff; Cox Health; St. Charles County Ambulance District; Amy Mattox; Missouri Nurses Association; Missouri State Medical Association; BJC Healthcare; Missouri Hospital Association; and Trevor Wolfe.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the bill as written would include abortion facilities and other Planned Parenthood locations and would stifle the first amendment rights of sidewalk counselors, prayer volunteers, or even union workers upset about their working agreements. This is already covered in the FACE act of 1994.

Testifying against the bill was Brian Westbrook, Coalition For Life St. Louis.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that abortion facilities have sued persons for trespassing and we need the language of the bill modified to protect first amendment rights.

Testifying on the bill was Bonnie Lee.

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.