

HCS HB 1276 -- UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

SPONSOR: Pike

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 4 to 0.

This bill modifies mandated reporting for unaccompanied and homeless youth seeking supportive services so that the youth's status alone is not sufficient basis for reporting child abuse or neglect (Section 210.115, RSMo).

The bill defines "supportive services" to include interventions, services, or resources necessary to assist unaccompanied youth, including food and shelter, counseling, case management, and legal services among other services outlined in the bill. The bill allows an unaccompanied youth to access supportive services as long as they are documented by a licensed mental health, counselor, or social worker as provided by the bill. The bill exempts persons who in good faith provided supportive services from civil and criminal action without permission from the youth's parent (Section 210.121).

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 this bill will continue the positive work that Missouri has already taken to help unaccompanied youth. Often the youth are in a situation for a variety of reasons and don't want to be "hotlined" so they will refuse services and hide from mandatory reporters that would be able to offer support.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Pike; Paul T Korte, Missouri Psychological Association; Missouri Coalition Of Children's Agencies; Kids Win Missouri; Jessica Funk; Allison Gregory, Foster Adopt Connect; Arnie C. Dienoff; and Gwen O'Brien, Synergy Services, Inc.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

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.