

HCS HB 1321 -- VIOLENT CRIME COMMISSION

SPONSOR: Copeland

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention by a vote of 9 to 1.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1321.

This bill creates the "Violent Crime Commission", within the Department of Public Safety, and the "Violent Crime Commission Fund". The bill specifies who will serve as members of the Violent Crime Commission and the duties of the Commission. Two of the members will have experience as criminal investigators, homicide detectives, or forensic experts, one shall be designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the other designated by the President Pro Tem of the Senate. One of the duties of the Commission is to establish a grant program to distribute funds to local law enforcement agencies for the purpose of preventing, investigating, and solving violent crimes.

The bill also specifies that money acquired by law enforcement agencies from asset forfeiture may be deposited into the Violent Crime Commission Fund, and the \$5.00 surcharge increase in all criminal cases involving a violation of the traffic laws of the state will be deposited into the Commission Fund.

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 goes toward addressing violent crime issues in this state, not petty crimes. The Commission is composed to focus on violent crime throughout the state. The violent crime rate increased sharply across major cities including St. Louis and Kansas City in 2020. This is meant to help alleviate some of the pressure on investigators. A lot of them are behind because of the increase in violent crime. This might be an adequate way to assist in the investigation of crimes. A lot of people who commit violent crimes re-offend so this might help get them off the street. They apply to the Violent Crime Commission and explain their need and say they are behind on investigations and they can maybe get funds to help.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Copeland; Dale Schmidt, Missouri Peace Officers Association; and the Missouri Fraternal Order of Police.

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

Testifying against the bill was 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.