



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 557</b>		DATE: <b>2/10/2021</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>AARON HERMANSON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>aaron.d.hermanson@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 11:54 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I was at Agape from early 2009 to August 2011. During my time there I was "restrained" twice. The first time on the first week I was there. I was attacked by a staff member and defended myself and was beaten down for hours on a gravel road on the compound. During this I was punched, kicked, elbowed, kneed, and molested. I had my head picked up and slammed into the gravel several times. When I finally got up and was forced to walk while I could barely stand. James Clemensen was standing there. With an evil smirk on his face he said, "I bet you'll never do that again." I was again "restrained" on my 17th birthday because I was demanding that I get to make a phone call because I was 17 and I wanted to get the hell out of there. James Clemensen ordered that staff members take me to the intake room and restrain me. So I was taken down there and was made to do physical exercise until I was unable to do anymore and I was tackled and restrained for not complying with their orders. So a "restraint" at Agape is a literal beat down. They also do a thing that is called a self restraint, which the person just lays on the floor face down, but staff members will walk by and kick that person in different areas on their body. I have not personally had that happen to me, but I have witnessed several of them. Public humiliations was also something they would do. So they would have brown town student duck walk through the shower bay in their boxers and make the other students look at them and laugh. Students that didn't watch and laugh would get punished for it. Normally having to join in with brown town for the night or other punishments. There was times that I was refused medical help on several different times. I ended up passing out before they took me to the doctor, I was sick and also was dehydrated from not getting enough water. During rock hauling crews you were denied water breaks, but that is not all, even during meals water was limited. Everything there at Agape is abuse physical, emotional, mental, verbal, and even the education or I should say the lack there of. The lasting effects of being there I do not fully know, But I am in therapy today for PTSD and I had to teach myself things that people learn in high school while I was trying to get my bachelor's degree.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>AIMEE GROVES</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>grovesaimee7@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 11:16 AM</b>
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My name is aimee groves. I attended mountain park baptist boarding academy, agape boarding school, and refuge of grace girls academy now called wings of faith. Besides being one of the students victimized by the restraining procedures (16 people held me down for 8 hours by my pressure points) and a victim of the psychological abuse and religious cult like mentality, I am a survivor of the abuse. I am 33 years old and still wake up w terrors that I'm trapped back there. Being forced to inflict discipline n punishments on my friends I also witnessed some of the physical abuse. For example extreme workouts till people threw up and thwn forced to eat their own vomit. My biggest issue is the lack mw tal Healthcare. Most of these teens comes from traumatic backgrounds and have no way to process what has happened to them. There is Noone safe talking to. U never know what is going to b used against u. Thwy teach thwre is no such thing as mental illness. They teach that it's a Jesus problem and u need more Jesus. No these precious and already traumatized n victimized children need someone who will b a voice for them. At these schools u literally have to pretend to be someone else in ordwr to survive. So many of us survivors are so far behind in life because we were never taught basic life skills. The sex abuse that is being covered up is sickening. I personally helped protect one student from a staff at circle of hope qhile staff there for one month. There are countless stories of molestation and rapes. What can we do to better protect these children? The future of our country? We have to make sure we know what all schools exist. Background check requirements are a must. These places are breeding grounds for offenders. These children should be able to b questioned by social workers without a staff member present. They aren't going to tell the truth with a staff there bc if they do it will get worse for them. The punishment takes like bwi g on the wall or brown town or being restrained or basic rights that being able to speak may get taken away. I personally wasn't allowed to speak for over a year. I spent a total of 5.5 yrs in these schools. Escaped n ran away because of the rape culture this religion encourages. These schools need someone to hold them accountable. I cant believe how many years it has taken to get this far. These schools started in 1950s in tx n found safe haven in mo after being kicked out of around 8 diff states. No person should have to live w my trauma and need the therapy I need to overcome what these evil ones hungry child abusers have inflicted on me. Just bc I was a troubled teen didn't mean I deserved to b traumatized and treated as less than and like I didn't deserve to be alive. No child should hear people at these schools tell them they aren't lo ed by anyone and that's why they r sent there. Sorry for ruling. Thank u for listening. I could go on n on esp after being trapped in these torture chambwrs for 5 yrs. The lies thwy tell the parents are unbelievable. They had my own family scared I was going to KILL them if I was ever left alone w them again. They shouldn't have the power to destroy ad many lives as they have. The amount of former students we have lost due to suicide and drug overdoses bc of the trauma and trying g to forget the hell we survived. Cptsd from these places is extremely real and prevalent. Anyways thanks again for ur time

and reading this.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ALLEN KNOLL</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>AMANDA O'BRIEN HOUSEHOLDER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARA MANZIN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>arajaren@yahoo.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 5:47 PM</b>
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Thank you for gathering today to hear our stories and to consider legislation that protects children. Although my experience did not occur in the state of Missouri, it is eerily uncanny how similar the stories of survivors are from programs all across the nation. In 1998 I was sent to Spring Ridge Academy (SRA) in Mayer, Arizona against my will. My father, facing the recent death of my mother, was at a loss for how to help his teenage daughter, who was struggling with grief and depression. A local educational consultant recommended a "therapeutic boarding school." Though I was only there for 6 months, I experienced or was aware of; punitive forced labor, solitary confinement/shunning, refusal of proper medical care, withholding of food/water/bathroom access, sexual molestation and rape of a child by a staff member. The facility controls all communications and correspondence and prevents children from calling for help. The child is punished for attempting to do so either through forced silence, extending the duration of stay, and removal of meager privileges. If a child attempts to give any negative feedback about their experience via monitored phone calls, parents are told they are lying and manipulating them. Children are not be able to freely report abuse to parents or the authorities. The program I attended misrepresented the qualifications of staff and "therapists". They were and are ill-equipped to deal with the extensive range of conditions they purport to specialize in such as eating disorders and various psychiatric disorders. I personally was treated by an unlicensed therapist. Though I had been diagnosed and treated regularly by a psychiatrist prior to my arrival for panic and anxiety disorder, depression and insomnia, I only saw a licensed psychiatrist once during my stay. This doctor removed all of the medications I was taking and instead "treated" me with a homeopathic regimen, resulting in terrible withdrawal symptoms and severe panic and anxiety attacks for which I was subsequently punished and accused by staff and peers of "faking to get attention". I also sustained an injury (accidentally inflicted by a peer) when my hand was crushed in a slammed door. I was taken to the ER by SRA staff and was told I had soft tissue and tendon damage and would need regular physical therapy in order to maintain range of motion and ensure proper healing. The staff never followed up with my injury, I was never taken to physical therapy and I now suffer limited range of motion and disfigurement in my left pinkie. Many of the seminars, or "trainings" as the program refers to them, involve unlicensed current and past students/parents in a supposedly "therapeutic" facilitation role. These highly secretive "trainings", the essence of their program, are common to many behavior modification programs. They involve non-evidence based cult-like tactics that have evolved from a long lineage of seminars utilized by many questionable organizations including Synanon and Lifespring. My program's training sessions utilized attack therapy, forced emoting and limited food, sleep, and bathroom breaks to create heightened stress. A child's performance in these seminars dictated much of their progress in the leveled program. Children would often be compelled to lie or invent past traumas in order to be viewed as successfully "working the program" and thus hopefully advance towards leaving the facility. Thank you for giving us the chance to tell our story. I've been

reluctant over the years because I know that some of the abuse others experienced was far worse however, as a result of my time there, I have PTSD, irreparable family relationships, trust issues, and nightmares to this day.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>ArnieDienoff@Yahoo.Com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:22 AM</b>
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I am in Support of this BillIt Mandates that "Child Residential Homes" to Notify the Department of Social Services and to conduct background checks on all employees.This is very similar to HB-560





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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>BARB PATTERSON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>BRETT WILLIAM HARPER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>brettwilliamharper@Outlook.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:02 AM</b>
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I, Brett Harper, was physically, psychologically, and verbally abused at Agape Boarding School between the years of 1999-2003. As a result of the abuse suffered I now have PTSD, Major Depressive Disorder and have had sciatica and a fissured (ripped) disc since age 18. I am 35 now. Agape Boarding School ruined my life. Within just a few short months after attending Agape I was forced to quit college. I abandoned any hope I had playing college basketball for COCC. Depressed, in agonizing pain, alone, and still suffering from mental illnesses I didn't know I had I began to drink and that drinking only made my life that much worse. I found it difficult to find employment and when I did find it I often didn't last long. Unable to work a lot of places due to my back has limited my income and destroyed my social life in many ways. I'm simply unable to do what most men my age can and haven't been able to throughout my prime. I'm left feeling like less of a man and like my life has been robbed from me. I just completed my 2nd back surgery in less than two years. I'm looking at months of recovery. I have a disability hearing March 18th. I am now a burden on my cousin who has his own disabilities. Unfortunately I have nowhere else to go. It makes me so depressed I, a grown man at the age of 35, sometimes cry myself to sleep. If I can sleep. Every night I'm haunted, stuck back in the boarding school, unable to tell family what is really going on as they monitor all phone calls and letters. I am sometimes stuck there for what seems like an eternity. It feels like I'm stuck in a time prison. It's usually the same nightmare over and over again. Hard work out in the fields around Agape. My back hurts. There's no water for another hour. I'm dizzy with the heat beating down on me. I'm reliving my trauma every night. My cousin says I scream and I've woke up contorted, sweaty, panting or gasping for breath. I often stop breathing in my sleep due to sleep apnea as well so this makes this even more dangerous. Over the years I've struggled to get the professional mental health I needed because counselors reminded me of being trapped at Agape where people were there to "help you" and called themselves "counselors". I am proud to say I have a good counselor now and have for several years and have been sober for 20 mo. But I am LUCKY! So many of those who went to school with me see not and have committed suicide or couldn't handle life outside so they are in and out of jail or prison. So many didn't escape their pain and trauma. For those no longer with us like Joseph Barbette may they RIP. At Agape I saw dangerous physical restraints that use pressure points used. We were denied medical care when we needed it and there was no state licensed teachers, counselors, or professionals anywhere. The only thing they had was a small, almost closet sized infirmary with a guy who essentially played doctor. Very rarely could we go see the doctor in town who married to the owners daughter. We were told if we said anything about abuse we would get it when we returned. For the most part I avoided being restrained but I was shoved around a few times. Staff occasionally out their knee on our low backs to make push ups harder. This and all the hard labor without much water is what most likely broke my back. There is so much I could say about Agape and I will leave that for my book. I run a non profit called Spare the Rod. I am based out of Portland Oregon. My goal is to warn parents and legislators about the dangers of

these places before it's too late and more end up like me for the rest of their lives. Please consider this bill as a very small step. We need more steps to be taken to protect children but let's at least draw the line here. Thank you.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>CHANEL MARE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>runawaylove04@icloud.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 8:37 PM</b>
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My name is Chanel Maré I went to Circle of Hope Girls Ranch from 2006-2010 I am a British Citizen and what happened to me at this place and what I witnessed will never leave the nightmares in my head. I moved to Vegas in 2006 I got woken up at 4am in the morning by two escourters at the end of my bed forcing me to go with them restraining and picking me up to take me to the airport as I was screaming for my life because I didn't know what was going on and if this was real... I still think to this day that I am not safe when I am asleep thinking I am going to be taken away against my own will having this repeating nightmare is just only the beginning...I can tell you every literally every detail every smell and everything that happened to me at this place of hell I wish it would leave my mind but it won't I tried for years after leaving. When we drove up to this place in the middle of Humansville Missouri and I was forced to walk up to Boyd Householders office door and he answered it and it was like I was still in a dream I didn't think this was real. He told me about the shirt colour system and the rules of this place of hell. I also got stripped searched like a criminal my clothes taken away and forced to wear long skirts and a t shirt that was second hand. We were not allowed to talk to anyone unless it was important aka if the place was burning down. We were not allowed to look anybody. We got weighed every morning and because I was over weight when I got there I got put on half portions and had to drink 3 glasses of water before each meal and I got half of the food of everyone else. I was about 160 pounds when I got there and when I left I was 100 pounds. We also did slave labour all day no school work even if we did do school work it was with the program ACE and you find out when you leave it doesn't go towards your GED so it's pointless. Working outside was hard work from picking weeds and not allowed to go on your knees only allowed to crouch and trying to do that for hours and if you go on your knees you will get push-ups. Push-ups can range from 10-50 from other students that are higher shirts Boyd Householder can give as many as he likes he could just leave you in push-up position and sometimes forget you are there if you fell you would get restrained. Other students normally the bigger ones like me would get called and forced to do the restraining if you didn't restrain you would get restrained yourself. This is when Boyd would push you from the back of your neck to the ground and 3-4 other students would jump on you, pushing all your pressure points at the back of your arms and the back of knees you would be there for half hour to several hours screaming for mercy I can still hear the screaming to this day. While this was happening Boyd and Stephanie would be mimicking you and kissing eachother like this was all a game. I got restrained because I didn't want to read the KJV bible I was catholic before I got sent to Circle of Hope and being forced to read a bible and being forced to accept Jesus as my saviour because if you didn't you were not right with God then you were not in Boyds good books that means you were not going up those shirt colours that means you got treated like what would he say a black shirt the lowest of shirts was only on this earth to breathe, eat if you were lucky work and read the bible and you didn't want that. We went to Berean Baptist Church Springfield on Wednesdays and Sunday's forced to participate and listen to their sermons we would sit

at the front we were not allowed to talk to anyone unless people came up to us we were not allowed to say anything negative about Circle of Hope otherwise we would be a black shirt. We were not allowed to look at boys because that was worldly and we are sinners and would get punished if we did that. Pastor Ables knew what was going on but because we were troubled teens he thought we deserved it. Scheduled bathroom breaks you had no privacy and you were only allowed 3 sheets of toilet paper if you were urinating and 4 if you were going bowel movement and if you didn't go bowel movement in 3 days you would be forced to take milk of magnesia. One girl because she needed the toilet more than once every hour got taken to Boyds office she was forced to drink pitchers of water jog on the spot she then wet herself and was restrained for not holding it in. 5 min showers that was getting undressed, shower and get dressed all under 5 mins if you didn't you would get a cold shower the next day and push ups. You were not allowed to say if you were still hungry otherwise you were forced to eat bowl upon bowl of plain oatmeal a few girls threw up because they couldn't eat more and then they were forced to eat there own vomit I saw them lying in the living room floor because their stomach hurt so bad for eating too much. Boyd also got a certain girl to massage his head at night time as he watched tv. We were not allowed to listen or watch anything from the outside world we were secluded if it wasn't anything to do with the KJV then it wasn't allowed. When I was there a girl slept with a staff member Ron Sheldon we got told that our family members were going to be told and found out later they were told nothing and she was under age and Boyd had not told authorities. We couldn't tell authorities what was happening at Circle of Hope because everything was monitored every phonecall and letter if we said anything negative then our phonecall or letters would be stopped so there was no way of us telling anyone in the outside world what was going on. The list can go on it is very traumatising what happened to me at Circle of Hope it's the re occurring nightmare that will never stop and no child should have to go through what we went through I ran away in 2010 and hitchhiked 1400 miles across America there was an amber alert out for me and America's most wanted missing person but were looking for me I did everything I can and didn't care what danger I was putting myself through because i didn't want to go back to the hell hole that I went through while being there you had to be a robot you had to have a smile on your face you couldn't have any say in what was going on otherwise you would be punished and living like that for 4 years still takes a toll to this day because you find it hard to live in society you didn't know anything about anymore. I have panic attacks on a daily basis I can't sleep I can't trust authority because every person in my life that was meant to make me safe as a child has failed me. I don't know how to express my emotions because for so long I had to hide what I was really feeling because I didn't want to be punished. I battle working because I am scared to do something wrong and my boss have a go at me. I have been diagnosed with PTSD from this place. You failed me America. Your such a beautiful country it shame that these places are allowed to be open but what happened to me there still 11 years later I cannot erase the trauma I have and many others have experienced it's heartbreaking and something needs to be done to these places so the next generation feel safe. PS my grammar/syntax is a testament to 4yrs of ACE only education. May we have Zoom next time?



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>COLTON SCHRAG</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>coltonschrag@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2021 9:49 PM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DANNY VO</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>dannyvo34@yahoo.com</b>		ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 7:12 PM</b>
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My name is Danny Vo. I am a survivor of the trouble teen industry. When I was 13 yr old, I was sent away to a wwas program in Jamaica call Tranquility Bay where I spend 10 months in 03 to 04. I was taken away from my home by 2 strangers who were escort transporter hired by my parent to transport me to Jamaica. When I first arrived, I was strip search, forced to shower before getting my uniform and my head was shaved. The program was advertise as a program that was suppose to help trouble teen. I was cutting class, hanging out with the wrong crowd, and had anger issues and my parents wanted to get me help. And as the program advertise, my parent thought I was getting the help that I needed but that was not the case. My first night, I witness students sleeping in the hallway with the lights on because they were on punishment instead of sleeping in the dorms. I witness a student with cuts that covered both his whole arms because he was cutting himself with razor blades hoping that his parents would take him home. I would hear kids screaming because they were getting restraint and this was a normal thing. Everyday you can hear kids screaming. The way the staffs would restraint us is they would have 4 to 5 staffs take you down and drag you into a room and each staffs would have there knee on the kids' elbow and they would bend your elbow back to inflict pain and this would go on for hours. We were not allow to talk to another students or even make eye contact the whole time we were there. I was put in isolation multiple times where I had to lay down on my face from morning to bed time and then I could get off that position to go to bed and I would be in that position for a week straight while there are students that would be in that position for 9 months straight or more. We showered outdoor everyday and we're lucky if there was any water left, otherwise we would have to pour water in a bucket and washed ourselves. We also hand washed all our clothes 2 times a week. Every once in awhile, I would hear about a student trying to commit suicide, myself included at one point and we were not helped. We were taken to isolation for punishment when all we wanted was help. Our parents were not aware of what was happening either because our letters were read and probably never got send out. For 10 months, I was not allowed any phone call and the students that was allowed phone calls because they have moved up in the program, their phone calls were closely monitor and they were not allowed to speak anything negative about the program or they would hang up the phone and the students would be punish afterward whether it taken to isolation or restraint. On March 2004, my parents decided to take me home because I was falling behind in my school work there since the education there was reading out of a textbook and taking a test after each chapter which I struggle with because there were no staff members that would help me if I needed it or they were not educated. The program made me worse when I got home because of the trauma I had endured and at the time I was 14 yr old and did not realize how that affect me then. I went back to doing the same thing I was doing that got me send away the first time but reality I just needed help. In September 2005, at 16 yr old, 2 strangers came into my room in the middle of the night and woke me up and took me away again. This time I was being transported to Missouri to a boarding school call Agape Boarding School (Agape Boy

Ranch). My experience at Agape Boarding School was different from Tranquility Bay. I did not experience the physical abuse like I did in Jamaica but I was mentally abuse but there are students that was physically abuse at Agape. I was forced to endure 3 weeks of boot camp when I first arrived. They would have us do intense workout from morning to night time with very minimal break and water break. I witness students who were out of shape and if they could not keep up with the workout, they would get punished for it. The staffs there seem to love torturing us and these are grown men while we were just kids. Religion was forced upon us since they were an independent fundamental baptist church and school. We did not have a choice so we were forced to read our bible every morning and every night before bed and force to memorize versed. We were force to do manual labors around the ranch in the hot Missouri weather and cold weather in the winter. For punishment, they did not have isolation but they have a table called the no talking table and students were forced to sit down and look down at their bible from morning til night. They can be in this position for weeks or months. Or we would have to stand on the wall for weeks from morning to night. And they would punish us for anything. I was put on the wall because I needed to use the restroom in the middle of the night and that was not allow after light out. Staff would verbally abuse us on a daily basis. They would talk down on us rather than helping us be better and that take on a lot of tolls on mental health issues. Every kids is different and some have special needs and there are a lot of former students in these type of schools that do not do well after leaving the program and many have commit suicide also. I myself have struggle and still are after all these years. I still have nightmares about being send back. And just when I think I'm doing fine, I still get triggered by anything that remind me of being back at one for these programs. To whom it may concern, I hope you take this testimony along with the testimonies of other survivors that these schools and program get regulated. These are children and they need help, they need counseling, guidance and prepare them for the future. They do not deserve to get tortured as punishment. These children are the future and as children, their brain are still developing and all they need is help even when they don't realize it yet.





MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 557</b>		DATE: <b>2/10/2021</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DAVID BOWSHER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DAVID BRYAN PATTERSON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>hokeypokey722@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 5:58 PM</b>
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As a gay student sent to Agape Boarding School in 2002 I can only relate my time there as being synonymous to conversion therapy. There was daily preaching from behind the pulpit of "Stop burning the American Flag and start burning Fags." I was told I was a worthless degenerate, that was only going to end up in prison or dead. Before arriving at Agape I was an honor roll student the worst thing I had done was smoke pot once and drank once in the same night. My parents inability to navigate their own divorce and child rearing and my coming out as gay would be the ultimate reason why I was sent to Agape Bording School. I was police escorted there by off duty cops. Waking me up at 4:30 in the morning telling me "we can do this the easy way or the hardway" while showing me a pair of handcuffs. They picked out my clothes and made me wear a belt backwards in case they needed to handcuff me to myself, and made me wear a "transport boot" a shoe you would get if you had a broken foot and a cast to walk in. To inhibit myself from running away if I tried. Upon arriving in Agape I was strip searched naked in a room full of grown men id never seen before and then I was taken to get my head shaved. I would be restrained multiple times for not conforming and submitting to the schools strange and often times peculiar interpretations of the Bible. One example a preacher said that music was Satan's gift to educate the world. This confused me for years because I had always been passionate about music and the trauma of this sermon haunted me well into my early adult years. Other boys knew I was gay and would come on to me both physically and sexually while I was there. When staff found out I was treated as some sort of vile leper. Once being forcibly tucked into my bed so tight that I could not even roll over and sleep on my side. I was treated as less than and as if I was sub human when word got out about my being gay.They monitored and censored our mail and phonecalls. Using black sharpie to take out parts of our letters both sent and received mail. Hanging up our calls when they heard us talk about something they didn't want out. When the tornado happened our phonecalls were not monitored and I was able to tell my mom just how crazy, harmful, and insane Agape is. She started the process to get custody of me. My dad knowing our phonecalls were monitored he wanted me to only have a phonecall with the court mediator. My mom pushed to get me out to California. I spoke with the court mediator for hours and he recommended and deemed that "going back to Agape boarding school would be detrimental to my mental health". He was absolutely right. Upon leaving agape my mother woke me up by turning the lights on common practice at agape however this time at home in California I woke up and put on my agape uniform and stood at my own bedroom door with my Bible. Thats when my mom and I knew something was seriously wrong with my mental health due to the trauma of being forcibly sent away to Agape Boarding school. The PTSD, the night terrors, fear of abandonment would plague me well into my twenties. For nearly eleven years I had the same reoccurring night terror trying to run away from agape only to be caught and to wake up screaming in terror gasping for air and covered in sweat. Please don't allow these schools to operate in your great state. Please have social services on sight monitoring 24/7 independent agencies to review

**state guidelines and policies of child residential facilities and above all else if you love your child  
please do not send them there**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DEIRDRE SUGIUCHI</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>dresugi@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 7:56 AM</b>
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When I was fifteen, my parents sent me to Escuela Caribe, a fundamentalist Christian reform school in the Dominican Republic. At this school students were forced to exercise for punishment, sometimes until they vomited or collapsed from exhaustion. Students were beaten with a leather strap for minor infractions. Staff members would slam students into the wall if they thought we were out of line. It was a school where students of color were punished more severely than white students, a school where it was taught that homosexuality was immoral, equated with pedophilia or bestiality, and a school where we girls were taught that having sexual feelings meant we were whores. Escuela Caribe is a division of Indiana's New Horizons Youth Ministries. The above statement only captures a snapshot of the ways my peers and I were physically, sexually and emotionally abused in the name of religion. I have written essays for Huffington Post, Dame Magazine, Religion Dispatches, the anthology Empty the Pews: Stories of Leaving the Church about the trauma I suffered from my experience at this unregulated religious reform school. I also have maintained a blog, Unreformed, for over a decade, and am in the process of completing a memoir. These schools need to be overseen by appropriate departments.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DOMINIQUE GIANANTI</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>dgiansanti26@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 7:45 AM</b>
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My story is not unlike most other survivors. I was kidnapped and transported from my home in the middle of the night. I spent 2 years in programs. I know the lifelong trauma that comes with institutional sexual assault all too well. I was not groomed by this man, per se, I was mentally and physically tormented on a daily basis so that I did not have the WILL to fight back. I knew it would be worse if I did. I was told not to tell anyone, but I did. I asked for help. I asked to talk to someone. I asked to report it. What happened instead was that I was brought back to this mans office and assaulted again, under the guise of an apology for my having "misunderstood the situation". No child should experience this. No child should experience this and NOT be able to tell anyone. NOT be able to report it. Being scared to report it because you know worse will come. I promise you their are children with that thought going through their minds this very second. Children living my nightmare. Please do the right thing, and protect our children.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ELIZA LAMM</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>eliiza@icloud.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 6:52 PM</b>
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Chairman (Chairwoman), Members of the committee, Thank you for the opportunity to be heard here today in support of bill numbers 557 and 560. Regretfully, I am unable to appear in person due to a scheduled doctors visit, but I am available by phone, email, zoom, or other videoconferencing platforms. My name is Eliza Lamm and I am a 37 year old survivor. I am originally from Beverly Hills, California and currently reside in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I am a land/farm owner in Stoddard County in South East Missouri. I have been waiting for a moment like this for 22 years. On January 23, 1999, I met Bud and Debbie Martin of Wings of Faith Academy (also known as Refuge Independent Baptists Girls Academy in Clinton Tennessee, Refuge Independent Girls Academy in Gastonia, North Carolina and numerous others). I met Bud and Debbie Martin in their home - a single wide trailer in Clinton, Tennessee. It appeared to be a standard family home with all the usual furnishings - a couch, dining room table, framed photographs of the family, a television. I was informed by Debbie that I was sent there by my parents for a period of two years or until I turned 18 years of age. Naturally, being young and somewhat naive, I believed this information to be true. However, it was the first of many tactics utilized by both Debbie and Bud Martin to exert power and control over me. Bud and Debbie Martin are predators who prey on the most vulnerable in our society, innocent children, for their own personal financial gain. Bud and Debbie Martin established a demerit system at their so called "school". We were told that we could be punished for doing "wrong", but ironically, we could not be rewarded for doing "right". I am not familiar with their current system, but I would suspect that it has not changed much. While I was under the care and supervision of Bud and Debbie Martin, I watched and observed them over the course of a year and half. I followed their rules and guidelines, with few, if any, deviations. As is the case with most children that are subjected to abuse, my personality changed and I suffered irreparable harm that will haunt me for the rest of my life. I cannot get back those years or take away any of the physical and mental abuse that they inflicted on me, but the one thing that they could not take from me was my unwavering belief that they were evil. After I learned of Bud Martin's criminal background from their very first "student", JH, I grew even more suspicious of them. However, I had to keep my suspicions to myself because seeking help from authorities or professionals was not allowed. In fact, the only help we were allowed to receive was from the Bible or from them. We were not allowed to talk to anybody at church, unless Bud and Debbie were close by and able to listen. We were cut off from the "outside world" with no access to a telephone, postal mail, newspapers, internet, television, radio, etc. We were not allowed outside and the windows to the trailer were nailed shut. They even dead bolted the one working door to ensure that we could not leave the premises. It is so frightening to think that they are still operating today and holding children hostage. Bud and Debbie Martin abuse children, both physically and mentally, under the guise that they are helping children and their families. They never lived by example, rather, they ordered us to do what "Christians" would and should do, including devotion prayers every morning. Interestingly, neither Bud or Debbie did any

devotions themselves and would in fact, stay in their bedroom for the bulk of the day, sleeping or surfing the internet. Their lack of empathy, concern and morals is reprehensible. Bud and Debbie Martin do not have the required education or skills, let alone credentials, to sufficiently help anyone especially troubled "teenage" girls. Both Bud and Debbie Martin hide behind the First Amendment - "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." to justify their behavior. In January of 2000, Bud and Debbie Martin encountered a problem with the Department of Social Services in Clinton, Tennessee after one of the "girls" got out, ran and called the authorities. Less than a month later, Bud and Debbie sat all of us down and said, "Our attorneys have advised us that any girl that does not want to be here can go home". After going home, a few months later, Debbie told me that the state of Tennessee gave them the option to either put one of their employees in the school or leave the state permanently. That is when they officially relocated to Gastonia, North Carolina and dropped "Baptist" from their name. Unfortunately, I was sent back to their "school" in North Carolina and upon my arrival, I asked to speak to Bud and Debbie Martin. Eventually, they met with me one evening and I told them that I wanted to speak with a local social worker. Debbie immediately said "No!" In response, I told Debbie that I would remember that moment when I turned 18. As a result Debbie punished me and put me on silence. I reached out to Sara Makin of Makin Wellness and asked for her professional opinion because of my personal experience with Bud and Debbie Martin. Please take the time to read her professional response to my inquiry below. Again, thank you for your time and feel free to reach out to me for any additional information or questions you may have. Eliza Lammeliiza@icloud.com 310-409-7817 MAKIN WELLNESS 239 4th Avenue, Suite 1801, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 744 5th Avenue New Kensington, PA 15068 (833)-274-HEAL



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COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>EMILY ADAMS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>EMILY VAN SCHENKHOF</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-826-0031</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>CHILDREN's TRUST FUND</b>		TITLE: <b>DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>301 W. HIGH STREET</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>GABRIEL JOSEPH GONZALEZ</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>gbartender@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 11:40 AM</b>
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Dear honorable members of Missouri, My name is Gabriel Gonzalez and I am writing to testify on the need for legislation solutions in religious residential programs in Missouri's troubled teen industry. First, I want to point out and remind this body that these proceedings are a response to a mounting of abuse allegations from two religious residential Troubled Teen ( treatment) facilities. It is important to consider these religious programs did not properly cooperate with the state in reporting abuses and is impart why we are here today. and I also asked to consider amendments to any bill put forth that allow religious freedoms to opt-out of basic comprehensive legislation in protecting young people in care. To further explain why this body must take immediate legislation solutions; I would like to share a bit of my personal experience which is from a troubled teen facility called Freedom Village USA (FV) of Lakemont, NY. As a program teen participate, I received not only poor education, but experienced forced labor conditions, and controversial punishments. I was also constantly being monitored from my communication to my family through phone calls and writing. the program restricted basic things sucks as books to read, and provided no source of news or tv from the outside world. There were times where basic things like heat weren't provided during cold winters. The program also used extremist views and if I did not comply or question them, I was punished. These punishments consisted of isolation tactics, mind-numbing exercises of punishment such as hauling wood in a parking lot from one side to the other for hours, including public humiliation by the staff and the director. There were times I wanted to leave and I was trapped in a place where fear was used as a form of control. Also, all my communications were monitored by which preventing me to seek help. For three years of my life of a program that was supposed to be 12 months became a nightmare. Not only was my request to leave was dismissed by staff I was presented that I would fail in life outside of this program. . One practice they used was to promote students into staff positions who were not only qualified nor trained to work with this population that I belonged to. This not only enables abuses to occur but was again under-reported to the states of what can be argued as civil rights violations on young people. I have submitted through email to one of the offices of senator Viet a breakdown of Freedom Village to better understand those challenges faced by not only myself but other survivors. I also included documents to understand the severity of how a non-regulated program such as freedom village ran into problems such as court cases. These documents I ask to be attached with my statement. It is also important to note that Freedom Village was part of the same network as Agape and Circle of hope; both programs used the same resources including their education and behavior modification approaches as Freedom Village did. Freedom Village ran unregulated by claiming religious freedoms to not cooperate with the state and self-regulated. This permitted frauds, scammers, and child predators working with a population of vulnerable youth labeled as troubled teens. these young people ranged from situations such as drug addictions, struggles with mental health, dysfunctional families, and more. Moreover, it is important to be aware of the therapeutic claims and behavior modification approaches being made by

the mentioned programs. Whether they are registered or licensed as a therapeutic facility and how they distinguish themselves from other private schools to understand the impact on the populations they serve and to determine the legislation solution being sought out in this hearing. Freedom Village holds similar allegations as the two mentioned Missouri programs. These include sexual assault allegations of which the administration did not properly report nor provide proper training to its staff on how to report and handle abuses. To give a clearer example, a court case that was won against Freedom Village USA found the institution failing to report and conduct a background check of a staff member. That case listed the same staff member of sexually assaulting a young teen boy in his bedroom. Again, this is a clear example of why cooperating with the state and why oversight and regulations are needed to provide basic safety. Not only did Freedom Village experience allegations of institutional abuse but has multiple court cases in court currently revolving around sexual assault and rape. These cases and allegations range from every decade of Freedom Villages' existence including my time I spent there. Again the administration was aware of many of these incidents and did not properly report and used religious freedoms to dodge the state in reporting. For example, When I attended Freedom Village I witness a fellow program participant who reported a sexual assault incident who said he was raped. That incident never got reported to the proper authorities and was dismissed internally leading to expelling that student from the program the day he made that claim. This is an example of how an unregulated program operated to distance itself from a sexual assault allegation. And this incident is one of the court cases currently in court right now. Additional allegations examples at Freedom Village are as followed: A pregnant 15-year-old girl comes to Freedom Village USA. She never receives proper medical care. Not only is she shamed but is also punished. She ends up miscarrying during an inappropriate form of physical punishment (woodpile) and is sent home to distance the program from her. An older male staff member, named Tom Edelsinki, allegedly had an inappropriate relationship with young girls which resulted in a teen getting pregnant. Staff Member Miguel Galan, a former program student promoted to a high-level staff position, was arrested for having inappropriate relations with a young male. and returned several times to the program for visits. A staff member, who was called Coach Rhodes, allegedly had an inappropriate relationship with a young girl which didn't get reported to the authorities. A staff member named Pastor Harris is currently in a court filing for accused of sexually assaulting a young teen boy multiple times. These are all examples of the challenges of institutional abuse with no oversight and with little to no regulations protection of a residential troubled Teen Facility. Freedom Village also did not comply with state law as a private school in NY. The educational curriculum was not in compliance with the state and provided its students with an inadequate education. These students including myself were not prepared properly and did not meet standards in proficiency as a high school graduate. This led to many of the former students' struggles in preparing for higher learning. When applying to higher learning, their diplomas were rejected from state universities. This resulted in students seeking a GED to salvage their education which includes me. I believe we can all agree that to provide poor inadequate education to young people is not only neglect but also abuse and I ask this body to also consider whether adequate education standards are provided in the said programs, whether it may be in a religious or secular format. Overall I hope by sharing some of my experience at Freedom Village USA you could help understand challenges faced by a troubled teen program that used religious freedoms to dodge basic common sense oversight protection. By not providing comprehensive oversight, it leaves open the opportunity for fraud, abuse, and child predators to prey on our young people as in the example and case of Freedom Village USA. Many of these allegations could have been prevented if there were proper checks in balances put in place. Furthermore, I ask this body to review the programs such as Agape and Circle of Hope associations and controversial practices/approaches on young people. This includes the network they belong to determine your solutions in protecting our young people. I understand it is a challenge to question the use of religious freedom abuse. I want to share with you that I am a person of faith and believe in religious freedoms as a Christian on how it is important in our society. In my faith, I attend a protestant church and share some of the same values many of whom are present at today's hearing. and I not only beg but employ you that we must protect our young people from harm's way even if it is masked under a religious ministry. It is furthermore our responsibility including those in faith to protect youth and children. These programs I mention including the network they belong to have not only a habitual history of refusing to cooperate with state agencies are also in my opinion detrimental to the protections the state of Missouri is committed to for youth and children in care. Today with the others who are testifying, you hear residential programs that are running with extreme cases of abuse that are habitually happening to young people attending troubled teen facilities in your state. These are extreme cases of abuse and allegations that are also considered civil rights violations against our young people who are vulnerable in care with little to no protection in place. It is also important to note, many religious programs do cooperate with the state to provide educational programs that meet educational standards including safety measures for its students. however to allow institutions, specifically residential programs unchecked with little to no oversight leaves the door open in where

abuses can occur. In closing, I trust this body will review these concerning issues and again thank you today for not only your participation and patience; but the work you have laid ahead in protecting the young people in the state of MO who currently in "unchecked" programs. Respectively, Gabriel Joseph González



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<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>HALEY HOMPSTEAD</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>fireflies222222@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 11:48 AM</b>

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

**I am a survivor of an abusive residential school in Missouri and support legislation that makes the TTI regulated in Missouri.**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JAMES GRIFFEY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>griffeyaudiosolutions@gmail.com</b>		ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 4:50 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I was a student at Agape Boarding School in Stockton Missouri from 1998-2001 and then was a staff member from 2001-2002, My first night at Agape as a 15 year old kid I was in the dorms getting ready for the evening when I was given push-ups (which was a generic punishment that was handed out for breaking any rules). I was not able to do all the push-ups given to me, and my arms were collapsing underneath me. I was brought up to the adult staff member that was running the dorm and he was told that I was refusing to do my push-ups. I tried to explain that my arms were giving out underneath me and I couldn't do them. He didn't care, he told me to do more push-ups. I complied and once again my arms collapsed after a few push-ups. When I collapsed I uttered the word "Gosh." The adult staff member got in my face and yelled at me saying "You cannot say that here, that is using my God's name in vain! Do more push-ups!" I didn't understand what was going on but I got down and started to try and do more push-ups. My arms collapsed again and the words "Gosh dang it" came out of my mouth. I sat back on my knees immediately and covered my mouth and said "Oh man, I am so sorry." At that moment the adult staff member pounced at me throwing me on my back while he straddled my mid torso, and he began to punch me in the face and head-butt me in my face. And while he was doing this he was yelling "I told you not to use my God's name in vain!" It took 3 other adult staff members to get him off me. I was then escorted down to the bathroom to clean the blood off my face. No report was taken, my parents were not told of the incident, the staff member was not written up or punished, and he continued to harass me. He would walk by me in the dorm and cock his arm back with his fist clenched like he was going to hit me and then laugh as I coward away. And this was all within my 1st week at Agape. I tell this story to provide a detailed description of something I experienced personally at Agape and so you understand that when abuse is talked about at these programs, it isn't just some of us exaggerating a childhood memory of a staff member being mean to us. Real, unregulated abuse is happening in these programs. The kids are being silenced and are not able to give their parents or the authorities any kind of hints. These programs are masters at manipulating the students in their care and the communities that they operate in. They rub elbows with local authorities and have their influences on government officials. I could spend hours talking about the different abusive situations I witnessed at Agape. And how the staff at Agape would brag that they were allowed to do these things and get away with them because Missouri doesn't get involved. They take advantage of the separation of church & state that exists in Missouri. On another note, I also help with a podcast that has done 29 different interviews of ex-Agape students. And no matter if the ex-student was at Agape when they were in Washington or they just got out of Agape less than a year ago, they all speak to the same types of physical, mental and emotional abuse. Do I think that the government should dictate how a religious institution worships their God? No. But if any of these religious institutions are worried about the government getting involved to prevent child abuse in their programs, that tells me they have something to hide. Missouri has failed it's children for decades, but now you have the power to make a

**positive change & protect future generations from living lives riddled with PTSD. I pray you make the right choice with this.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JESSICA SEITZ</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-415-6228</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI KIDSFIRST</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>520 DIX ROAD, SUITE C</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65109</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			





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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JOSHUA BRADNEY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>joshuabradney5011@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 1:17 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

Here is my statement my name is Joshua Bradney I went to agape boarding in august 2014- august 2016. My first day there I was approached by a staff named Julio he said if u respect me I respect u. That was the first thing he said to me. 3 days later I was getting a haircut standing on the wall in the room and he started yelling at us. He grabbed my shirt and ripped it and threw me to the ground cause I told him he spit on me. He spit on me again. He called another staff member named Jason Aaby and they physically dragged me out and put me in the padded room and a knee on my neck. And my arms behind me. As my time went down n I was personally picked in by staff named Julio samdaval Brent Jackson Leo lenze And more My time there was horrible and I was thrown down the stairs by Julio and got stitches from it. And another time by Brent Jackson. I was scared I wanted to kill myself. I was raped by the Older students and staff rewarded them and punished me. I have witnesses who will say I was. My trauma is very bad today so much went on at the school. I can't trust anyone and not even my best friend. I've lost everyone. When I was at the school staff made me do push-ups and told kids to beat me up. I am 19 years old today. And when I was there I was bisexual and in the closet and staff told students to beat me up until I'm straight. And if not staff name was Julio who did all this. This place is always on my mind and I cry about what happens there today. I want to help kids there and do everything I can to protect them. The staff there never cared for me and I have scars from them physically on my forehead. Thanks for all the help you guys are doing. Plz help us close the school or get the law changed. Also note I am against a agape. So hopefully I did this correctly



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KELLY SCHULTZ</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-522-8686</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>OFFICE OF CHILD ADVOCATE</b>		TITLE: <b>DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>TRUMAN BUILDING, ROOM 680</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65202</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MAGGIE A DREW</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>magretdasquirrel@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 2:04 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

My name is Maggie Drew, and I was subjected to multiple varieties of abuse and neglect while in a tax exempt religious school in Missouri. I was molested by the founder, Boyd, I was robbed of my grandfather's inheritance to me for college as a minor and unknown to me until I found out when I told them I was leaving, I broke multiple bones, and needed medical treatment several times and was told to "tough it up and deal with it", ( I have scars and bones still out of place, not to mention I'm fighting for help to get my back problems that they caused, fixed still ), I was underfed and clothed in hand me downs that were held together by patch work the girls could manage and that didnt fit me, I wore the same skirt for 3 months without it being washed in 2007 because they had "nothing that would fit me" because I was tall, but they refused to get adequate uniforms, we only got clothes donated from people or churches, they had me as a 17 year old running med call with no medical training or licensing ever in my life, and told me it was fine because Stephanie was a registered nurse, I watched and was told to (not asked, we got threatened to be on the floor with them if we didnt make them cry loud enough) help with painful and violent restraints, I watched them lie to families and parents and churches while monitoring us like hawks and turning students against each other, I saw dhs come out a couple times, but I never got to speak with them. We were always told before dhs arrived as they had to get instructions to the property and that allowed boyd and stephanie to prep and scare us with horror stories and telling us that " the truth always comes to light" as a threat that if we told the state the truth they would make our lives hell if they found out, and thats only a small portion of what I saw and witnessed. We, as children in a place that was being paid by churches for their "honorable missions for christ" and by unknowing or uncaring parents/gaurdians for tuition, were heavily abused, and were told that the state couldn't step in, that they couldn't tell Circle of Hope how to punish us, or how to treat us, we were theirs and theirs alone, since our parents signed us in, they couldn't even pull us out without boyd and stephanie agreeing or suing them. They always tried to make the state out to be this terrible monster that wanted to rip us away from god and send us into the world unprepared and to fail, and it scared some of the girls for a long time. We were told that the police were on their side so going to them was like begging to be brought back, and girls tried, and were brought back and left with no help, after reaching out and telling the police, "they hurt us" and they didn't care. I'm a grown woman now, and a parent, and when I tell you that the state needs oversight on homes like Circle of Hope and Agape', I couldn't be more serious. Someone needs to hold them to a safety standard because the hell that I, for 5 whole years, and many others, some even longer, have been subjected to is absolutely unacceptable. There is no reasoning that anyone can give me that would justify the state not being to check up and say, "you need to buy your kids clothes that fit" or say "you should really be giving them the chance to do their schooling instead of having them do free hard labor to help you build appearances" or even a " We need to have a licensed therapist on site for these kids that isnt on your payroll" because any of those simple steps or even the presence of the state of Missouri being there

for us to go to at some point would have been a literal life saver, and we wouldn't have as many girls coming forward with rape and abuse stories from these places. There needs to be an accountability or something set in place to help the students, because that's what this is about, the students, not how many chapters of the bible we had to recite from memory and if we didn't we missed our meal, or how if you didn't work hard enough according to your piers you didn't eat that day. Both of those situations I witnessed multiple times while at Circle of Hope. They used the bible as a way to punish us, "don't work, don't eat" was a really frequent one, and if we had someone on site that could've stepped in, we wouldn't have women out here right now trying to fight the body dysmorphia they got thanks to Boyd calling them pigs and Steph telling them they'll never amount to more than a prostitute when they leave because it wasn't on their own terms. These are all things that the state could have prevented from happening if they had been allowed some type of intervention above just the occasional dhs visit here or there that never helped us. WE as kids needed help, and we were ignored of a place that claimed a religion was what kept the state out of their business, they found a loop hole in the system to get away with abusing children, and enough is enough I say. We need to get rid of that loop hole, religion did more harm to me than good in that setting because it was a forced and brainwashed situation, had they not been allowed to abuse us using the bible, and christianity as a mask to hide, I wouldn't sit here right now telling you some of these awful things I witnessed and experienced from 2007 to 2013, and some of the even worse things happened after I left. Change isn't wanted in this regard, it's needed. From mental abuse to verbal to physical and sexual, we all suffered and still suffer due to the fact that the state had no say because we were in a religious organization and it was used to the fullest extent of their ability before they shut down. Circle of Hope finally shut down, for which I am grateful, but Agape' still stands, as does wings of faith academy on the same property, and to me, as a parent, that is unacceptable. If we need places to help teenagers they shouldn't be allowed to hide behind a religion and continue to abuse children. We can do better. Please help us do better for the next generations of kids. They don't need the physical problems I have, or the night terrors I get, or the loss of appetite and the inability to vocalize and communicate with people like I had to work through thanks to the trauma I got from a place that went unchecked for far too long. No one deserves to feel this turmoil and pain, especially not children, no matter how hard they are to handle.



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<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MARCIA HAZELHORST</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>680-6463</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI JUVENILE JUSTICE ASSOCIATION</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>1431 SOUTHWEST BOULEVARD, SUITE 7</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65201</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>	

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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MARIANNE MILLS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>mare567@yahoo.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 4:27 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

See as above



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MARY CHANT</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>5733036765</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI COALITION OF CHILDREN'S AGENCIES</b>		TITLE: <b>CEO</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>213 EAST CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 101</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL: <b>mary@e-mcca.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 4:42 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MIRANDA SULLIVAN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>miranda@talktroubled.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 7:51 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

Since the dawning of the US, we have had a predatory prevalence for kids in cages. Many of the MO programs are from the IFB / Lester Roloff tree which is also rooted in residential homes for the Indigenous. Currently on a f those programs, Agape, is accepting children through ICE (funded by our federal tax dollars) while simultaneously remaining exempt from any oversight or regulations. Many of my friends were brutally abused in MO. When we visited in Nov, the complicity of the local authorities was anything but covert. It is standard for programs to root in rural communities where integration is probable, employing locals and buying support. Agape employs local sheriffs and deputies, the same deputies which investigate the abuse allegations. Through our podcast, Troubled, we have connected with far too many who share similar experiences of abuse. As an ex altar girl, Catholic girl school from CT, I assure you that conversion therapy is torture and that "brutally sodomizing young boys" will not turn them straight. We have decades of such abuse among the spawn of (incl) Agape. We need you to pass this legislation so that we can hold these predators accountable and protect further children. MO is a trigger for thousands of Americans, but we hope that what happens here today will trigger a wave of justice that we can work on together.





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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>NATALIE WILLS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>wills_natalie@berkeley.edu</b>		ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:35 AM</b>

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

I was sent to three programs after meeting my parents for therapy and being handcuffed by two large strangers who threatened me with their martial arts abilities. I was forced to sleep in a hotel with them and had no idea who they were or where they were taking me. I knew I was going to a camp for 5 weeks. That was extended and then I was referred to a lockdown facility after running away again in fear of continuous abuse. I also went to a stepdown RTC, which I was convinced I had to go to in order not to die. 2 years of my childhood between 2007 and 2009 had been stolen from me. I consider this false imprisonment, considering the amount of isolation, separation and estrangement that was forced upon me. Previous to being sent away, I smoked marijuana and would have gladly done whatever amount of jail time smoking marijuana would have given me (even though where I live now it's legal). I also cut class, and ran away from home AFTER parent's threatened to send me to one of these places. I was running from the abuse that I knew, through word of mouth, existed within this institutional structure. Its all shame/attack therapy based, teaching the kids that they would not move up in levels and get their basic human rights (ability to talk to parents, go outside, make eye contact with other kids) unless they participated in attack based therapy AND worked for the facility (a lot of gardening, every day). Speaking up would result in extremely isolative consequences. On multiple occasions I watched kids who were not a threat to themselves or others get restrained, hurt and placed in isolation. They got treated this way on random. I was forced to listen to stories of rape, molestation, suicides, and more, stories that these kids did not feel comfortable sharing in front of MANY total strangers, and strangers did not feel comfortable hearing. But if neither participated, human rights would be taken and punishments would include extreme isolation. I have PTSD from all the stories I was forced to listen to, in detail. Children are blamed and shamed for everything, except becoming a master of psychological attack therapy. There is no compassion and whether or not you would move up in levels really depending on how well you stroked the staff's ego. Nothing is evidence based here. My therapist did not communicate or coordinate with staff. My therapist encouraged me to break rules; rules that if broken would cause me to lose many rights and become restrained and isolated. My parents were charged hundreds of thousands of dollars and were manipulated and told that if I did not attend these programs I WOULD DIE. Today I have PTSD and nightmares that effect me every day.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>NICOLE M. NORTON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ROBERT LEPIDO</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>robertlepido@yahoo.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 2:44 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I Robert Lepido attended AGAPE Boarding School and received physical and mental abuse from the staff . Also seen sexual abuse . Most this abuse was from brother Burton , mainly brother bryn Clemson , brother Scott and was supervised by Jim Clemenson . If you want to request details please text or email me . 561-635-7607 robertlepido@yahoo.com Thanks Robert Lepido in closing I'd like to ad I've had to live with these horrors my whole life since the abuse happened at 12 years old . The only justice I seek is for the children still suffering at that school today ! My wish is that no child go through what I had to in the hands of agape boarding school !



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SHELLY SNOW PORDEA</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>shelly.pordea@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 4:28 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I have not been institutionalized in a troubled teen home, but am a survivor of the IFB cult. This is the movement that spawned homes like Circle of Hope and Agape in Stockton, MO. Sending us away to places like these was always a looming threat in our home and the abusive tactics and teaching of the IFB make it incomprehensible that facilities can use religious exemption to be unmonitored even today. As a Missouri native and current resident, I support any regulation that will protect children and abolish "religious" practices that have done damage to so many. Please vote to protect our children.



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BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 557</b>		DATE: <b>2/10/2021</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SHELVA THOMAS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 557</b>		DATE: <b>2/10/2021</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SUSANNA ORAH KLEIN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>Orahleh@hotmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 11:50 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I'm a psychotherapist and behavior analyst. It is essential that the troubled teen industry come under tight regulation due to the proliferation of abuse in these facilities. The "treatment" these facilities typical offer involved humiliating, threatening, and even assaulting children. Our children deserve humane, evidence-based treatment.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>CAITLIN WHALEY</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-751-4815</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES</b>		TITLE: <b>LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>221 W. HIGH STREET</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 12:00 AM</b>	

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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

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<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>CYNTHIA SCHOTT</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>schott07@aol.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 6:05 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I was placed in an unregulated girls home called Bethesda we were beat, starved drugged. Abused emotionally, and physically daily. I was placed there at 13 I was a pregnant girl. I had been raped by multiple family members who years later were convicted for raping other children. The home knew of my abuse and did nothing! They covered up the crime for a monthly fee and sold my baby to the highest bidder on the black market. I was told daily it was my fault I was a whore! I was refused food placed in lockout rooms with Lester Roloff tapes playing loudly. I was not allowed to make eye contact or communicate. I was forced to memorize Bible verses or refused food. I got black tongue. I received zero medical care! I was sent to Tennessee on oct 20,1980 where I was trafficked to other men for sex. I eventually escaped! Bethesda closed a few months later by the FBI they moved to Missouri and opened mountain park. A boy was murdered there. My friend Connie Munson ran away from Bethesda. She threw herself in front of a truck and was killed instantly, when children would rather die than live one more minutes in these kinds of torture chambers that tells you a lot. I'm 55 I still have nightmares. I never found my baby.....





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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KYRA FRANKOWSKI</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>frankowskiky@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/10/2021 8:51 AM</b>
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I am a survivor of two "troubled teen," "therapeutic" programs in Utah. I was struggling with my mental health as a 13 year old, to the point that my parents felt they had to resort to one of these programs. First I went to Second Nature Wilderness Therapy, and then Eva Carlston Academy (a NATSAP program). I was gone from January 4, 2014, to August 14, 2015. Those two years are a dense fog that I will never get back. At these programs I experienced and witnessed several kinds of abuse, in my opinion. We were psychologically attacked daily, and often forced to perform manual labor for the programs. I still have nightmares about my time there, and have lost friends from their internal battle with the haunting memories of those places. No child deserves this "treatment" - regardless of how "troubled" they may be. There needs to be more oversight so that kids don't keep getting hurt.