



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 293		DATE: 1/25/2023	
COMMITTEE: Emerging Issues			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/25/2023 7:18 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am in Favor of this Proposed Legislation that NO Order from Any Government Political Subdivision or Public Authority can Stop, Prohibit or Not allow the Assembly of Citizens for Religious Purposes. Common-Sense shall be used with all.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: GERALD E. WISTRAND		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: gwistrand@reagan.com		ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/24/2023 5:02 PM
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JARED TOTSCH		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: Jared.Totsch@protonmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2023 12:08 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I support this bill in it's original form on 1 condition..... it adds text that specifically makes it crystal clear that any infectious disease (such as COVID-19), does NOT fall under any of the exceptions listed in the bill that would allow for the government (any public official) to ban/prohibit or restrict/limit the gathering of people at a place of worship for a religious service or meeting. I want this bill to make it abundantly clear that any public official may NOT enforce any type of facemask mandate, stay-at-home order, vaccine mandate, or social distancing mandate at any religious service or meeting at any place of worship. I want this bill to have "teeth", so that any public official who violates this bill faces criminal charges resulting in a monetary fine and jail time.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JOHN WEBB		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: mailto:johnwebb53@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/24/2023 5:06 PM

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Absolutely! our Constitutions align with our God given liberties that should never be interfered or violated by government officials.No act that violates our God given liberties is valid.!



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KATE SICKLES		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: katesickles@hotmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2023 1:41 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I writing in support of HB293 with the addition of protections for religious institutions in regard to orders relating to infectious diseases like COVID-19. We have a constitutional right to freedom of religion and no government entity can take away that inalienable right under ANY circumstances.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: TIMOTHY FABER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: timothy@ephesians412.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/20/2023 9:10 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am in favor of this bill as it is in keeping with our God-given rights as delineated in the first amendment of the US Constitution, that the government shall not in any way inhibit the free exercise of religion.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ADAM HAYWARD		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: adam.lewis.hayward@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/25/2023 11:57 AM
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The first amendment recognizes an individual's right to practice their faith. There is no such right to accessing specific buildings in order to practice their faith, nor is access to specific buildings necessary to practice one's faith. Public officials need to retain the ability to close places of worship, should the need arise, in order to maintain public safety, health, and well-being, such as during a pandemic. Restricting one's ability to access specific buildings does not violate one's first amendment rights, nor does it even prevent the ability to practice one's faith with their chosen congregation (due to the advent of online, digital meeting spaces); restricting the ability to prevent access to specific buildings as part of a public safety measure only stands to endanger the public. As a resident of the district of the bill's sponsor, Riley - Riley should be ashamed for putting forth a bill that not only doesn't impede one's constitutional rights but also has the potential to put his constituency at risk.



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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: BRIAN KAYLOR		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: WORD&WAY; CHURCHNET		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: bkaylor@wordandway.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 1/25/2023 2:59 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I oppose to House Bill 293 not because I do not care about religious liberty, but precisely because I, as a Baptist minister, cherish religious liberty for all. I do worry about government infringing on our free exercise rights. But we need to remember that our First Amendment includes two religion clauses. And we must respect them both. Not just the Free Exercise Clause but also the No Establishment Clause. These two clauses sit together and thus demand balance. The problem with this bill is that it loses sight of that balance. Religious gatherings should be treated like similar gatherings. Houses of worship should not be hit with harsher rules than similar organizations. But religious gatherings should not be exempt from the same life-saving health rules to which similar gatherings are subjected. This bill acknowledges that the free exercise right is not absolute, thus leaving in place the right of government officials to limit or prohibit religious services or meetings through temporary emergency evacuations or building and fire codes. That standard should not be thrown out for other generally-applicable health rules.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: BRITTANY WILLIAMS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: AMERICAN ATHEISTS		TITLE: STATE POLICY COUNSEL	
ADDRESS: 225 CHRISTIANI STREET			
CITY: CRANFORD		STATE: NJ	ZIP: 07016
EMAIL: bwilliams@atheists.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/24/2023 12:49 PM	

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

January 24, 2023
 The Honorable Rep. Bill Hardwick
 Chairperson, Emerging Issues Committee
 201 West Capitol Avenue
 Jefferson City, Missouri 65101
 Re: **OPPOSE HB 293, Testimony from American Atheists regarding legislation concerning protection for religious freedom**
 Dear Chairperson Hardwick and Members of the Emerging Issues Committee:
 American Atheists, on behalf of its constituents in Missouri, writes in opposition to HB 293, a bill that seeks to protect religious freedom by placing limits on public orders. This bill introduces language into the law that may have unforeseeable consequences. We urge you to reject HB 293.
 American Atheists is a national civil rights organization that works to achieve religious equality for all Americans by protecting what Thomas Jefferson called the "wall of separation" between government and religion created by the First Amendment. We strive to create an environment where atheism and atheists are accepted as members of our nation's communities and where casual bigotry against our community is seen as abhorrent and unacceptable. We promote understanding of atheists through education, outreach, and community-building and work to end the stigma associated with being an atheist in America. As advocates for the health, safety, and well-being of all Americans, American Atheists objects to efforts to subordinate the health and safety of all to the religious beliefs of a few.
 HB 293 overreaches where it prohibits the government from issuing an order that has the effect of limiting or prohibiting a religious group or place of worship from holding religious services or meetings. This language is likely to have unintended consequences. Moreover, the language is unnecessary because Missouri already has a Religious Freedom Restoration Act or "RFRA" in place. RFRA is a common acronym for a Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a state law that provides that government action may only burden religious exercise if it meets a stringent legal test. In order to meet this test, the government must show that its action was intended to meet a compelling government interest and the action taken was narrowly tailored, meaning that alternative methods will not be as effective to meet the government's goal. While RFRA laws were originally introduced at the federal and state level to protect religious exercise, in recent years RFRA language has been used in ways its supporters and sponsors would never have imagined, such as trumping nondiscrimination, public health, and safety laws. Especially when it comes to public health, the state government requires the flexibility to respond to emergencies appropriately, and the introduction of such a stringent test will hamper efforts to stop the spread of disease and deal with other emergencies. Furthermore, although the language in this bill applies in limited circumstances, it is likely to permeate to other areas of the law. In conclusion, HB 293 can have an unprecedented and potentially dangerous impact. Therefore, we urge you to reject this legislation. If you should have any questions regarding American Atheists' position regarding HB 293, please contact me by email at bwilliams@atheists.org.
 Sincerely,
 Brittany Williams
 State Policy Counsel
 American Atheists



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SUSAN GIBSON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: Onesuegibson@protonmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2023 4:03 PM
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Infectious diseases are just as deadly as flooding, fires, tornadoes, earthquakes, terrorists threats, civil unrest, and hazardous materials incidents.