



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 359</b>		DATE: <b>2/9/2023</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Crime Prevention and Public Safety</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>ARNIE C. "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>2/9/2023 11:55 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

I am have reservations here. I believe in Local Control and Less State Government. But I also believe in Public Safety. In addition Citizens of Missouri have Voted to return Control of the Saint Louis Police Department to the Mayor and Board of Alderman. The Board of Commissioners will only Create Policy. I am sure there will be Court Challenges.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>BYRON KEELIN</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-402-0655</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>FREEDOM PRINCIPLE MO</b>		TITLE: <b>PRESIDENT</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 15095</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63110</b>
EMAIL: <b>freedomprinciplestl@protonmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2023 11:42 AM</b>	

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

On behalf of the members and supporters of the Freedom Principle MO, please accept this e-mail as an official testimony in support of HB 53, HB 213, HB 216, HB 306, HB, and HB 702. HB 306 and HB 702 are like SB 78 which was recently passed out of the Senate Transportation, Infrastructure, and Public Safety Committee. The purpose of these bills is to consider returning control of the Metropolitan St. Louis City Police Department back to the State Board of Police Commissioners and to restore a once-great police department to be able to effectively protect the residents and businesses of St. Louis City. St. Louis City used to be a great city. Now it is a dying city riddled with crime. St. Louis City continues to be rated as one of the most violent cities in the United States. This is the result of an underfunded police department, which is unable to effectively patrol neighborhoods because its political leaders continually try to defund and dismantle it and continually belittle its officers and efforts to protect residents and businesses. According to St. Louis City Police pension data, it is estimated that more than 820 police officers have left the Metropolitan St. Louis City Police Department since 2017. Furthermore, according to the St. Louis Police Pension Board, the department lost an average of 120 officers each year between 2017 and 2019. In 2020, 129 officers left the force and 174 left the department in 2021. Police department data shows the number of authorized officers has fallen each year since 2020. There were 1,205 commissioned employees at the start of 2020, 1,198 in January 2021, and 1,128 in January 2022. According to St. Louis City police supporters, that number is now down to 825 active officers. These diminishing numbers put the lives of St. Louis City residents and businesses in danger. We strongly believe in local control, but when the local control becomes irresponsible, it is up to the state legislature to take back this control and become the adult in the room. Because of Mayor Tishaura's efforts to defund and dismantle the police, St. Louis City population continues to fall. St. Louis City now has a lesser population than Wichita, KS, and Omaha, NE. My wife and I moved to the city in 2016 because of the diversity St. Louis City offers but were forced to move out of the city in 2022 because we had two attempted break-ins by a criminal and when we tried to call the police, we received no visit, nor any callbacks from the police due to a staffing shortage. Luckily for us, this wasn't an emergency. This lack of police is also having a dramatic impact on the Black community. According to St. Louis City government data, Black residents are more than 2.5 times as likely as white residents to be a victim of a violent crime. Why is this? It is because there are not enough police to effectively patrol all the neighborhoods in St. Louis. This means that all residents of St. Louis City are suffering because of the mismanagement of St. Louis City's elected officials. Now, communities, like St. Charles, Franklin County, and Jefferson Counties, outside of St. Louis City are now feeling the impact of this lawlessness as crime is starting to bleed into their communities. Returning control to the State Board of Police Commissioners is unfortunately a much-needed requirement. By returning control to the State Board, St. Louis City police officers, and St. Louis City residents and businesses

can have confidence that someone will be looking out for them.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DONNY WALTERS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-230-4063</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>ESOP</b>		TITLE: <b>PRESIDENT</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>5624 THOLOZAN</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63109</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2023 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JANE DUEKER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-265-5072</b>
REPRESENTING: <b>SLPOA</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 7781, 1100 TOWN &amp; COUNTRY COMMONS</b>		
CITY: <b>TOWN &amp; COUNTRY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>63006</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2023 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JAY SCHROEDER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI FOP</b>		TITLE: <b>PRESIDENT, MO FOP</b>
ADDRESS: <b>715 JEFFERSON ST.</b>		
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2023 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JOE STEIGER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-353-3200</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>ST. LOUIS POLICE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION</b>		TITLE: <b>BUSINESS MANAGER</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>3710 HAMPTON</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63109</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2023 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>KIRK HILZINGER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>kahilzinger@charter.net</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2023 6:43 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

As a resident of St. Louis City and someone who is politically active within the city and talks to many of the residents, I can assure you that crime is the main concern for most of the neighbors I talk to. In one week, 149 cars were stolen in the city of St. Louis and they are being found as far away as Texas near the boarder. Our police are overworked and there are not enough to do anything but answer high-stress 911 call to 911 call. Property crimes are usually taken over the phone with almost no follow-up unless your property is lucky enough to be found due to another investigation. Traffic laws are simply not enforced because no one has the time and I have seen cars go through stop lights at two or more times the speed limit. Temporary tags are so permanent, I am seeing ones that expired in 2021 behind clear plastic as to keep them preserved. According to numbers I have, there are about 790 "checked out guns" from the armory, which should be a more accurate number than what the mayor claims there to be because not many police go without guns. In addition to that, there are about 75 police officers using up their vacation and sick leave before moving to other departments or retiring. As you know, St. Charles County, St. Louis County and Jefferson County are actively recruiting police officers from St. Louis City through better pay, better benefits, better support from city leadership, better support from the community and less danger to the police officer as well as matched seniority. You cannot blame police for taking better opportunities when they present themselves and even though police have a badge number, police, like any other profession, are not just a number. The better police are getting recruited elsewhere, first. Our recruitment classes never go above 15. At a deficit of 400 officers to be fully staffed, we cannot replace these police in the near future, especially when the city discourages anyone from becoming a police officer. I actually sat on a public safety committee meeting for the Board of Aldermen in support of doing better to recruit police and another person offering testimony thought the money should be spent to give out fresh fruit, instead. That kind of thinking brought out by Tishaura Jones, Kim Gardner, Megan Green and Cori Bush's opinion on police is why we are having so many problems with the public. Police moral is very low. Tishaura Jones and Megan Green have been staunchly "defund the police" though they no longer say this because it would not be politically advantageous for them. Cori Bush still comes out and says it. I feel there is nothing that Tishaura, Megan Green or the rest of the anti-police members of City Hall could do to repair the damage they have done to our police department. Neighborhoods like mine have very few police because most are sent over to the higher crime areas, so if someone does have an emergency, it takes a bit longer to get someone on site and forget about trying to call the non-emergency line. It will just ring. In a neighborhood association I attended on January 23, 2023, Tishaura Jones came and took questions. I was fortunate enough to be able to ask her 3 different questions regarding crime and safety. I can tell you with absolute certainty that she has no desire to hire more police. She stressed she wanted to expand her "reimagined" police and use of social workers. She also said she wants to fix the reasons why people turn to crime. That does not really help for the current criminals we have who have been



emboldened because no one is holding them accountable. From what I understand, we should be at about 1,200 police. At 790, we are far short of that. Another person asked her how many people she wanted to hire for the city. She said 400, in total, between all departments. Her desire was 150 for the street department, alone. Another focus are the number of trash truck haulers. When you factor in all the rest of the openings within city hall, this leaves very few for police in that number. If you look at this like you would a business, you would see city leadership has failed the police. If this was normal business, the board would be fired and replaced, especially if they go around stating how bad their employees were. It is time we replace the people who are supposed to be leading the police department with people who would actively support the police and make requirements for staffing levels and then push to get those numbers to where they need to be.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>ANNE LITWIN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>anne@annelitwin.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2023 3:12 PM</b>
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**As a resident of the City of St. Louis, I am opposed to removing local control of our police department. Local control enhances accountability and community relations. Please do not remove local control. Anne Litwin**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>CHERYL LYNN ADELSTEIN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>cadelstein@icloud.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2023 8:00 PM</b>

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I am a resident of the City of St. Louis. Please do not take away local control from the St. Louis City Policy Department. This was widely approved by voters statewide, and is the preference of the St. Louis City residents. Every city in the state has the ability to control its own police department. Local control should be the over-riding principle on this and so many other issues that the General Assembly is considering. Vote no on HB 53, 213, 216, 306, 359 and 702.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DANIEL ISOM</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-622-3391</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>CITY OF ST. LOUIS - PUBLIC SAFETY</b>		TITLE: <b>PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>1200 MARKET</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63102</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2023 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JEANETTE MOTT OXFORD</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>jmo.mott.oxford@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2023 8:01 PM</b>
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I have lived in St. Louis City since 1987 and been a homeowner there since 1996. I vote in every election, including in the March and April municipal elections and believe it is important that I hold my elected officials accountable for their performance related to living conditions, including crime and public safety. Like more than sixty percent of Missourians, I voted for local control of the St. Louis Police Department in 2012, and I continue to believe this is commonsense public policy that our General Assembly should support. I ask that the Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee vote no on all six bills being heard on February 9. I welcome any questions you may have.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>KORTNIE HUDDLESTON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>kortniehuddleston@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2023 9:18 AM</b>
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I oppose these bills that usurp control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department from St. Louis City and place it under State control. None of these bills are proposed by Representatives that live or work in St. Louis City and the people of St. Louis City do not want this. The City of St. Louis only regained control of their police department in 2017, before which it was under State control. Crime was worse under prior State control and the City has been making improvements in the last 5 years. Therefore, the argument that the State regaining control will somehow fix problems holds no weight. St. Louis has just hired a new police chief. Let the Mayor and the new Chief do their work. If the State wants to help the police in St. Louis, they can make an effort to work with them and provide resources. Allow officers to get guns off the street and work with the Federal Government to do so. This is a blatant, and frankly, racist move to disregard the will of the citizens of St. Louis and steal away local control. This is clear hypocrisy from the conservative party of "small government". This is oppression. There is an alarming trend from this Legislature to arrest control from local governments, both urban and rural. Let St. Louisans govern St. Louis. I urge you to oppose this bill.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>L. JARED BOYD</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-622-3748</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>ST. LOUIS MAYOR'S OFFICE</b>		TITLE: <b>CHIEF OF STAFF</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>1200 MARKET STREET, ROOM 200</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63103</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2023 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MAGGIE EDMONDSON</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-368-1137</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>PRO CHOICE MISSOURI</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>1210 S VANDEVENTER AVE</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63110</b>
EMAIL: <b>maggie@prochoicemissouri.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2023 2:45 PM</b>	

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Chairman Fitzwater, Vice-Chair Brown, members of the committee; thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today in opposition to HBs 53, 213, 216, 306, 359, & 702 which seek to disenfranchise the people and families of the City of St. Louis from control of their own public safety operations. Pro-Choice Missouri works to protect and expand every Missourians' right to bodily autonomy, to access essential reproductive healthcare, to access accurate information to make the best decisions for ourselves and our families, and to parent our children in safety and dignity. Moreover, we work to ensure reproductive justice for all Missourians, which involves advocating to reduce disparities based on race, income level, insurance coverage status, and other factors. The right to make the best decisions for ourselves and our families in safe and healthy communities is central to our reproductive freedom and our ability to start and grow our families how we choose. The people of the City of St. Louis – not politicians hundreds of miles away in Jefferson City – know best what their community needs. The people of the City of St. Louis have already decided this issue– by returning control of the police department to the City nearly 10 years ago now. Additionally, municipal law enforcement budgets are funded by local tax dollars. The people paying the bills deserve decision making authority over their tax dollars– not politicians with no roots in their community. These bills are nothing but state-sponsored retaliation against the people and families of the City of St. Louis– of which the bill sponsors, who do not represent the City of St. Louis, happen to disagree politically. We know that crime rates are directly linked to access to quality jobs, social safety net services, and health care– this body can improve the public safety of the City of St. Louis and of all municipalities and territories in the state by expanding access to support services, stable housing, child care, quality nutrition, education access, and the like. In the absence of the State and General Assembly's attempts to actually address the root causes of violence and crime, the administration of St. Louis City Mayor Tishuara Jones has stepped up to fill those gaps with long-term, proven-effective programs and methods. In coordination with the federal housing initiative Mayor Jones has pledged to house 800 currently unhoused people and to build 500 new units of affordable housing by the end of this year alone. The administration has invested millions of federal dollars into providing financial assistance and relief to people and families hit hardest by the economic fallout of surviving a global pandemic– including working mothers who are experiencing some of the highest rates of unemployment as a result. Other local investment programs include supporting pregnant people's access to pregnancy care, the Cure Violence program, developed and implemented by impacted people in the City of St. Louis, and the newly established Social Workers for St. Louis initiative to allow for social workers and mental health professionals to provide support to law enforcement in cases that could be better served outside of the traditional criminal justice system. The people of the City of St. Louis have spoken; They trust their locally elected government leaders to address public safety. Pro-Choice Missouri, representing more than 60,000 members across the state,



and operating out of the City of St. Louis, opposes the advancement of this bill, and urges you to vote NO today. Thank you.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MALLORY RUSCH</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-306-8945</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>EMPOWER MISSOURI</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 104900</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65110</b>
EMAIL: <b>mallory@empowermissouri.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2023 9:25 PM</b>	

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

Date: February 8, 2023 To: Representative Lane Roberts, Chair, and Members, House Crime Prevention & Public Safety From: Mallory Rusch, Executive Director, Empower Missouri Re: Our opposition to HB 53/HB 213/HB 216/HB 306/HB 359/HB 702 On behalf of the staff, board, and statewide Criminal Justice Coalition convened by Empower Missouri, I am here today to oppose the bills referenced above. I am also a lifelong resident of and long-time homeowner in the City of St. Louis. Missouri voters overwhelmingly voted to return local control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department to the City of St. Louis only ten years ago. Proposition A passed in 2012 with a whopping 64 percent of a statewide vote. Missouri voters believe in local control of police. You will hear others testify today that voters made that choice because St. Louis made certain promises about outcomes if they were to regain local control. However, I pulled the ballot language from 2012, and this is not reflected in the ballot language. Missouri voters support local control unreservedly. Local control is important for accountability. As a country, we have generally come to a consensus about the type of policies that should be handled at the federal, state and local levels. Generally, if a service is paid for by taxpayers at a local level, it is governed by local officials. If services are paid for by state taxes, they are governed by state officials. And if services are paid for by the federal government, they are governed by Congress. Municipal law enforcement budgets in Missouri are funded by local taxes, and should be governed by local governments. This is the case in every Missouri municipality/county but one. Missouri has maintained control of the Kansas City Police Department dating back to the Civil War, and quite frankly, we believe that local control of that department should be returned to Kansas City's mayor and city council. I have been unable to find any reporting or data that suggests that any other city in the country has their police department controlled by the state. The only other city that was engaging in this practice was Baltimore, and they just regained local control in a November 2022 vote. (Interestingly, Baltimore has the second highest murder rate in the country, so it doesn't make a compelling case for state control of the police. Neither does Kansas City, which has the eighth highest murder rate.) In the last ten years since St. Louis has regained local control, there is more accountability of the police department to local government and therefore local taxpayers. In November 2020, a mere 17 percent of St. Louis city voters cast a ballot for Governor Mike Parson. While the state has elected him as their leader, city voters clearly preferred another candidate. It is unjust to give control of our police department to a board appointed by a governor who wasn't elected by the people most impacted by these policies. In March 2021, 57 percent of St. Louis city voters cast a ballot for Mayor Tishaura Jones. She has the confidence of the residents of the City of St. Louis, and she and our locally elected Board of Aldermen should continue to be entrusted with making public safety decisions for our city. As an anti-poverty organization, Empower Missouri holds a strong belief that crime is often a symptom of poverty. Some people break the law in a desperate attempt to provide for their families. Others live in communities,

both urban and rural, where there is an abiding sense of hopelessness. The disinvestment and poverty in these communities is often overwhelming. In the City of St. Louis, over 20% of our residents live below the federal poverty line. Communities ravished by poverty can become breeding grounds for drug use and other illegal activities. We can choose to address these issues through policing alone, or we can seek to address the root cause of the issue, working to ensure that every Missourian has an equal opportunity to thrive. Mayor Jones has demonstrated time and time again that she cares deeply about decreasing poverty across the City, and in the first two years of her administration, she has committed significant time and resources to this cause. Last year, she committed to rehousing 800 persons and building 500 new units of affordable housing by the end of this year as part of a federal housing initiative. She's committed to put \$5 million towards expanding Cure Violence and other community violence intervention programs. She has launched "Social Workers for St. Louis," an innovative new program aimed at hiring social workers and public health professionals to intervene in nonviolent situations such as mental-health crises as an alternative to the criminal justice system. Her administration is actively investing in youth programming and job training. The city has also invested millions of federal funds to provide relief to families who were hit the hardest by the pandemic, with a focus on helping families stay housed. The people of St. Louis are in good hands with Mayor Jones and our Board of Aldermen. They are choosing to focus simultaneously on both public safety and decreasing poverty. Decreases in poverty will mean decreases in crime. Decreases in homelessness will mean decreases in crime. Increases in mental health services and addiction treatment will mean decreases in crime. These efforts need to go hand in hand and be managed by local leaders. As a final note, I feel confident that the sponsors of these bills will be speaking today about the need to place the St. Louis Police Department under local control because St. Louis City has a bad reputation for crime that impacts the rest of the state. I don't disagree that we have a bad reputation. However, I think that it is very important to remember that St. Louis's crime statistics are skewed since we are one of the only cities in the country where the city is a separate municipal entity from the county. Every major city in the United States has concentrated areas of poverty and crime, but the impact of those areas is diminished by being part of a larger urban area. If you were to combine St. Louis City and St. Louis County into one entity and look at our crime statistics per capita compared with other major urban areas, our crime rate drops significantly. According to a 2019 study of per capita murder rates, St. Louis City ranks number one in the nation at 64.54 murders per 100,000 residents. However, when you combine the murder rates in St. Louis City and St. Louis County, our per capita murder rate drops to 22.63 per 100,000 residents. The combined entity drops us into 14th place, between Washington DC, and North Charleston, South Carolina. I think that it is also important to mention that the crime rate has not changed significantly since St. Louis took back local control. When you look at index crime data for the years immediately preceding and following the state regaining control, there is little indication that any major change in power happened. Crime has increased in St. Louis since 2019, but that is part of a national trend tied to the global COVID-19 pandemic and corresponding economic difficulties. As previously mentioned, but worth repeating, even under state control, Kansas City has the eighth highest murder rate in the country. If nothing else, this should be a strong indicator that state control of the police force would do little to curb high crime rates. This isn't about public safety— it is about control. The answer to addressing crime is to address poverty.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 359</b>		DATE: <b>2/9/2023</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Crime Prevention and Public Safety</b>		
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>MARCEL HAGENS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-299-8753</b>
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>ACTION ST LOUIS POWER PROJECT</b>		TITLE: <b>POLICY COORDINATOR</b>
ADDRESS: <b>5925 ETZEL AVE. 1ST FLOOR</b>		
CITY: <b>SAINT LOUIS</b>	STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63112</b>
EMAIL: <b>marcel@actionstl.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2023 8:31 AM</b>

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

House Crime Prevention and Public Safety CommitteeATTN: Chair Lane Roberts February 9th, 2023 Representative Roberts, On Behalf of the Action St. Louis Power Project, I would like to express our opposition to all bills that are being heard today that seek to take away local control of the St. Louis Police Department and revert it back to the hands of the Board of Police Commissioners. The residents of this city made their feelings clear on this topic ten years ago; over 50% of the city voted in favor of gaining local control. The state also supported this decision with 63% of the vote in the affirmative. Today, you are saying to those folks that their votes don't matter because you know better than them. Our Mayor, Tishaura Jones, along with the St. Louis Board of Alderman work tirelessly to keep the residents of the city St. Louis safe while also addressing contributing factors of crime, like poverty and housing insecurity. In just the last year, this administration created the Office of Violence Prevention within the Department of Public safety. This office is dedicated to utilizing public safety resources and community intervention programs to make the city safer. Crisis Response, an initiative which seeks to partner a trained clinician with an officer on calls related to behavioral health, has spawned from this office. Community Violence Intervention programs, which focus on reducing homicides and shootings by creating relationships with people at the center of gun violence in our communities, also came from the work of this office. Mayor Jones heard the needs of the people and went to work to transform and re-envision what it means to keep us safe. I would like to call out the elephant in the room - each bill submitted to be heard in this committee today has three things in common: All the sponsors are white men, republican, and not a resident of St. Louis City. It is clear that this attempt at regaining control is nothing more than a power grab based in fear of what black political power can create. With Mayor Jones as our leader, we are transforming what justice and safety can look like in our city. State control of the police is a civil-war era policy aimed at controlling Black cities. Missouri is the ONLY state in the country that is not only grasping tightly to this racist policy but seeking to expand it. I implore you to vote no on each and every bill heard today that attempts to revert control of the SLMPD back to the hands of the State. Marcel R Hagens Policy Coordinator Action St. Louis Power Project



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>MICHAEL DREYER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:                  ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>mdreyer93@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2023 9:16 AM</b>
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I oppose these bills that usurp control of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department from St. Louis City and place it under State control. None of these bills are proposed by Representatives that live or work in St. Louis City and the people of St. Louis City do not want this. The City of St. Louis only regained control of their police department in 2017, before which it was under State control. Crime was worse under prior State control and the City has been making improvements in the last 5 years. Therefore, the argument that the State regaining control will somehow fix problems holds no weight. St. Louis has just hired a new police chief. Let the Mayor and the new Chief do their work. If the State wants to help the police in St. Louis, they can make an effort to work with them and provide resources. Allow officers to get guns off the street and work with the Federal Government to do so. This is a blatant, and frankly, racist move to disregard the will of the citizens of St. Louis and steal away local control. This is clear hypocrisy from the conservative party of "small government". This is oppression. There is an alarming trend from this Legislature to arrest control from local governments, both urban and rural. Let St. Louisans govern St. Louis. I urge you to oppose this bill.