

HB 1707 -- LAW ENFORCEMENT PRACTICES

SPONSOR: Myers

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 22 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill allows the chief law enforcement executive for any law enforcement agency to request assistance from a law enforcement agency in another jurisdiction, including from outside the state but within the United States. The bill creates provisions for how arrests are handled if executed by an officer outside of his or her jurisdiction. The bill also specifies that, for benefits and other employment-related matters, law enforcement officers remain employees of their respective law enforcement agencies throughout any request for assistance.

Currently, the driver of an emergency vehicle may park or stand, regardless of the normal rules of the road; proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, after slowing down as necessary for safe operation; exceed the speed limit as long as the driver does not endanger life or property; and disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions. These exemptions only apply to emergency vehicles that, while in motion, sound audible signals by bell, siren, or exhaust whistle as reasonably necessary, and when the vehicle is equipped with at least one lighted lamp displaying a red light or blue light visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of 500 feet to the front of such vehicle.

This bill provides that an authorized emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle is not required to use an audible signal or display a visual signal when the vehicle is being used to get evidence of a speeding violation; respond to a suspected crime in progress when use of an audible or visual signal, or both, could reasonably result in the destruction of evidence or escape of a suspect; or conduct surveillance of a vehicle or the passengers of a vehicle who are suspected of involvement in a crime.

This bill is the same as HB 1015 (2023).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that those who run to the sound of the gun deserve all the tools in the tool belt they can have. The mutual aid agreement describes the protocol in these instances as far as employment, benefits, and workers' compensation. Supporters state that the bill also deals with emergency motor vehicle language, including when an officer needs to use lights and sirens.

This change is needed because sometimes an officer does not want to alert the person they are after of the officer's location. In the Kansas City area, there is a memorandum of understanding but this would provide more clarifying details.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Myers and the Missouri Police Chiefs Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say when law enforcement makes special privileges for themselves, like being able to go 100 miles per hour without lights and sirens on, there are officers that abuse the privilege. The witness expressed concern that there isn't enough consideration for the safety of the public.

Testifying in person on the bill was Jon Stambaugh.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.