

HCS HB 1716 -- MISSING PERSONS

SPONSOR: Byrnes

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Emerging Issues by a vote of 13 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1716.

This bill requires a law enforcement agency that receives a missing person complaint to generate a report of the missing person with the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) within 30 days if the missing child, vulnerable person or adult may be at immediate risk of death or injury, as specified in the bill, and after 180 days in any other case. The law enforcement agency may attempt to obtain additional information and materials that have not been received. Upon the location of a missing person, the law enforcement agency that reported the missing person will remove the missing person's record from NamUs.

The bill requires every coroner or medical examiner to communicate with an assisting law enforcement agency regarding identification of unknown human remains. The medical examiner, coroner, or assisting law enforcement agency will create an unidentified person record in NamUs prior to the submission of samples or within 30 days of the discovery of the unidentified remains. For historic or prehistoric skeletal remains not of medicolegal significance, jurisdiction will be transferred to the state historic preservation officer for further investigation.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that there are a number of unidentified missing persons cases within Missouri that could be solved with the implementation of NamUs. NamUs provides a database of collective information on missing persons that can be easily accessed by law enforcement. Currently, there is not a unified approach to missing persons within Missouri law enforcement. NamUs implementation would provide a singular place for all missing persons information to be gathered and accessed. Having a singular database would allow for better communication between those looking for missing persons and would therefore increase the chances of missing persons being found. The current missing persons system in Missouri has a lot of incorrect and duplicate entries. This makes it more

difficult to identify who is still missing or if a report is accurate. NamUs would help to remedy this issue.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Byrnes; John Grady; Matthew D. Hackmann; Courtney Nelson, Missing Person Support Center; Lindsay Trammel, St. Louis County Office of Medical Examination; Stevie Crump; Diane Scherer-Morris; Anthony Scherer; and Arnie Dienoff.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

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.