

HB 2000 -- MISSOURI FAIR HOUSING ACT

SPONSOR: Mann

This bill repeals housing related discrimination provisions from the Missouri Human Rights Act and establishes the "Missouri Fair Housing Act" for such claims. The Missouri Human Rights Act, as amended, applies only to employment and public accommodation discrimination claims (Section 213.150, RSMo).

MISSOURI HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

The bill modifies the definition of "because" to be that the protected criterion was a contributing factor, instead of the motivating factor, to the adverse decision or action and modifies the definition of "employer" to include any person acting in the interest of an employer (Section 213.010).

This bill repeals a jurisdictional condition for the Missouri Commission on Human Rights to investigate requiring that a complainant file their complaint within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory practice.

The bill repeals a provision stating all civil penalties imposed pursuant to a finding by the Commission be paid to the Human Rights Fund (Section 213.075).

The bill repeals provisions of the Act which overturned certain court decisions related to the Act which established a legal standard to use in deciding summary judgment motions and which mandated or prohibited the use of certain jury instructions (Section 213.101).

This bill further repeals a provision of the Act that limited the time and reasons that the Commission could issue a letter indicating a complainant's right to bring a civil action (Section 213.075).

The bill specifies that an aggrieved person may bring a civil action in circuit court notwithstanding the fact that the person has not filed a complaint with the Commission.

The bill provides that a prevailing respondent may only be awarded court costs upon a showing that the case was without foundation, and removes certain limits on the damages recoverable by a prevailing plaintiff (Section 213.111).

This bill repeals a provision which stated that Chapters 213, 285, and 287 provide the only remedies for a claim arising out of the employment relationship (Section 213.070).

MISSOURI FAIR HOUSING ACT

The repealed provisions of the Missouri Human Rights Act relating to discrimination in housing practices are reenacted in substantially the same form as part of the Missouri Fair Housing Act. The bill provides that certain housing practices are unlawful when taken because of a person's race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, disability or familial status (Sections 213.150 to 213.188).

This bill is the same as HB 505 (2023), and similar to HB 1529 (2022).