

HB 2381 -- PROTECTING MISSOURI'S ECONOMY DURING A SHUTDOWN ORDER

SPONSOR: Brown (16)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Special Committee on Small Business by a vote of 7 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 2.

This bill creates the "Protecting Missouri's Small Businesses Act".

The bill requires the State and its political subdivisions to give careful consideration to and appropriate concern for the lasting effects of actions taken during a shutdown order that adversely affect the economic viability and well-being of Missourians and businesses.

The bill provides that beginning January 1, 2025, if any political subdivision with jurisdiction over a business implements a shutdown order and the business closes due only to the shutdown order for at least 21 consecutive days or at least 45 cumulative days, the following requirements apply:

- (1) Waiving any fee for a business license during the period of the shutdown order or six months, whichever is longer; and
- (2) Reducing the real and personal property tax liability of the business based on the number of days the business was shut down in a given year, as specified in the bill.

If a taxpayer rents or leases all or a portion of the taxpayer's affected real property to one or more renters or lessors, the taxpayer must distribute a pro rata amount of the reduced liability to renters or lessors who are current on all lease or rental payments. This bill is not to be construed to affect professional licensure and does not require the state to provide restitution or to replace lost revenues to a political subdivision.

This bill is similar to HB 2753 (2022) and the same as HCS HB 1263 (2023).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that small business owners paid a heavy price when they were ordered to close during the height of the COVID epidemic. The bill allows businesses to recoup a minimal amount of their losses. It gives political subdivisions some impetus to consider the consequences of shutdown orders.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Brown; and the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the bill violates due process; we should study what was done and then not do it again.

Testifying in person against the bill was Cary Wells, and Freedom Principle Mo.Org.

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.