



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1655		DATE: 2/21/2024	
COMMITTEE: Judiciary			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C."HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/21/2024 11:55 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1655		DATE: 2/21/2024	
COMMITTEE: Judiciary			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: GWEN SMITH		PHONE NUMBER: 314-324-9656	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: EMPOWER MISSOURI		TITLE: CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY MANAGER	
ADDRESS: 4428 ELLENWOOD AVE			
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63116
EMAIL: gwen@empowermissouri.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/21/2024 1:20 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

As the largest and oldest anti-poverty non-profit in our state, Empower Missouri is committed to improving the quality of life for all Missouri residents through advocacy. Since our inception, Empower Missouri has focused on the criminal justice system and its impacts. Our Community Justice Coalition consists of community advocates and organizations from across the state who work with those who have been impacted by the criminal justice system. Many coalition members are formerly incarcerated or have currently incarcerated loved ones, and all are connected by a vision for a future without mass incarceration. We are providing testimony today regarding HB 1655, sponsored by Representative Roberts. HB 1655 would create a registry for individuals on supervision (probation or parole) who have been convicted of first or second degree murder. Empower Missouri strongly believes that it would not be in the best interest of public safety to publish the names of a population that is already subject to victimization- those with serious mental health disorders. Research shows that people with severe mental illnesses are over 10 times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general population. Theft and financial exploitation of those with severe mental health concerns is also a major concern. A searchable public database creates the opportunity for this vulnerable population to be an easy target, and at risk for an even higher chance of being victimized. In addition to posing a risk to an already vulnerable group, such a registry would make it more difficult for anyone required to register to find gainful employment and successfully assimilate into their communities. These individuals have served their time, and are still accountable to their parole officers, who require frequent check-ins, location updates, and to be notified of employment changes. Under the Interstate Compact, anyone with an out of state case would be under the supervision of Missouri Probation and Parole. Anyone with a Missouri case is already searchable on both Casenet and the Missouri DOC Offender website. Rather than making communities safer, the public scrutiny that comes along with a registry could have a reverse effect of leading to higher rates of recidivism. It is difficult to support successful reentry while also creating a new class of social pariahs. Decades of research point to the limited impact of registries. A meta-analysis of 25 years of research, published in 2021, found that sex offender registries had no impact on reducing recidivism rates.* For these reasons, we urge the committee to oppose HB 1655. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.* Zgoba, K.M., Mitchell, M.M. The effectiveness of Sex Offender Registration and Notification: A meta-analysis of 25 years of findings. J Exp Criminol 19, 71–96 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-021-09480-z>