



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
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: 2/5/2024 11:22 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I am in Support of this Bill and the Intention to Practice Free Religion, as afforded in both the Federal and the State Constitution after the threat of a major storm is gone.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
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: BECKY BICKHAUS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: doniibecky@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/2/2024 4:15 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Absolutely



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: BYRON KEELIN		PHONE NUMBER: 314-402-0655
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: FREEDOM PRINCIPLE MO		TITLE: PRESIDENT
ADDRESS: PO BOX 15095		
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63110
EMAIL: freedomprinciplestl@protonmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 6:34 AM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

The pandemic resulted in the greatest infringement upon our constitutional rights. What we saw by the governments forcing churches to close, but at the same time keeping liquor stores or even in some cases adult-themed stores open, was the biggest infringement upon our First Amendment rights. In many instances, churches are the center of a community. They bring people together and they provide essential services for many in the community. Closing churches was unnecessary denying citizens their religious freedom and violating their right to peacefully assemble. This bill has been approved by the House twice and it needs to immediately be passed again. We must protect our constitutional right to religious freedom.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: DEE MILLER		PHONE NUMBER: 816-258-3346
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: FREEDOM PRINCIPLE MO		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: HARRISONVILLE		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 64702
EMAIL: deempr2662@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2024 9:34 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

It would prohibit the government from shutting down churches, particularly during a pandemic.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
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: DON BICKHAUS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: doniibecky@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/2/2024 3:38 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I am in support of this legislation...BUT...in saying that, NO government entity or person representing a government entity has ever had right to tell the people or give the people 'permission to worship GOD and /or gather as we please. This GOD-given right was obstructed during COVID. I believe that most of the people who fell to that scheme now know better and will tell ANY government official in ANY capacity to 'GO POUND SAND!' And if you remember correctly the big box stores got to stay open as the government squashed the mom and pop stores not to mention it was still alright to go gamble and get drunk. "GO POUND SAND!"



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
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: JOHN WEBB		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: mailto:jw53@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2024 11:22 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I support this bill because it would prohibit the government from shutting down churches period, particularly during a plandemic or other government theft of our liberty. - This bill establishes the "Missouri Religious Freedom Protection Act". The bill provides that no public official may issue an order that has the effect of limiting or prohibiting a religious group or place of worship from holding religious services or meetings.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024	
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: KIRK HILZINGER		PHONE NUMBER: 314-412-5061	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: FREEDOM PRINCIPLE MISSOURI; ST. LOUIS CITY GOP CENTRAL COMMITTEE		TITLE: DIRECTOR/COMMITTEEMAN	
ADDRESS: 5225 FAIRVIEW AVENUE			
CITY: SAINT LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63139
EMAIL: kahilzinger@charter.net	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 9:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

One of the cornerstones of our US Constitution is the freedom of religion and the exercise thereof. When COVID happened we went way over the top on restrictions in a panic, most of which never did anything to actually prevent the spread of the disease. I can't think COVID stops spreading after a certain hour or above a certain height at a restaurant or doesn't come in the out door or in the in door of a store. I call this period the dumbest time ever. When we were "allowed" to go to relatives' houses, I distinctly remember having to sit outside on the deck, isolated away from everyone, and my young nephew crying because he couldn't hug his grandmother. We blocked people from being with their family in hospitals as they lay dying that not only was horrible to do to the person sitting there dying alone but also to the family losing a dear loved one and then we made it all the worse by blocking them from having a funeral. As someone who lost the woman I intended to marry, you need to say goodbye for closure. During this time, those who believe needed to be in their church, mosque, temple or other religious center. They needed religion more than ever during that time. Also, we can never allow this panic to ever take away our freedoms ever again. You never should make decisions while panicking and you should never govern under panic.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
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: MICHAEL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: MichaelWesten.3up@protonmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 2:40 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I SUPPORT the spirit of HB 1959. However, I would like to see the terms "epidemic" and "pandemic" specifically listed as reasons why a government entity is NOT allowed to shut down a church, mosque, or temple. Furthermore, I would like to see protections put in place to protect all legal activities that would take place in a church, such as AA meetings, church leadership meetings, food pantry operations, community outreach operations, and such during a pandemic/epidemic. Furthermore, I would like to see the exceptions for flooding, fires, tornadoes, earthquakes, terrorist threats, civil unrest, and hazardous material incidents removed from this bill. I think the scope of this bill should be limited to pandemics/epidemics. I agree that religious leaders are the best people to determine if/when to shut down their place of religious assembly.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
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: TIMOTHY FABER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: timothy@ephesians412.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 7:53 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
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: AMY HAMMERMAN		PHONE NUMBER: 314-494-5410
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN ST. LOUIS		TITLE: STATE POLICY ADVOCATE
ADDRESS: 295 N. LINDBERGH BLVD.		
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63141
EMAIL: akuo.hammerman@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 4:03 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I am Amy Kuo Hammerman. I volunteer as State Policy Advocate with the National Council of Jewish Women St. Louis, a nonprofit organization representing 5,000 members and supporters from across the state. We are guided by Jewish values to improve the lives of women, children, and families through direct services, education, advocacy, and philanthropy, while safeguarding individual and civil rights. I submit this testimony in opposition to HB 1959 because, contrary to its title, it does not protect religious freedom. In fact, it opens the door to discrimination and exclusion of diverse religious views by prohibiting public institutions from promulgating rules and regulations that prevent organizations from committing discrimination and exclusion. Our public institutions must be open to all and they must be permitted to have rules that make that happen. To allow organizations to exclude people based on constitutionally-protected characteristics violates the very nature of our republic. I urge you to vote NO on HB 1959.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
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: BRIAN KAYLOR		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: WORD&WAY		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: bkaylor@wordandway.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 11:06 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Houses of worship and religious gatherings should be treated like any other mass gathering. A virus like COVID-19 does not care if a gathering is religious or not. Do not unnecessarily tie the arms of public officials to keep people safe. There should be no pandemic privilege for religion.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DANY LACIO		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: dany@promoonline.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 12:48 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Rep Hudson mentioned that our founding fathers wanted this. Unlike Representative Hudson I have a degree in history and it is repeatedly mentioned that the founding fathers wanted a separation of church and state. That was the entire reason why they came from "across the pond" to govern themselves and with that John Locke and Rogers Williams established a separation of church and state, it was formalized in a 1905 law providing for the separation of church and state, that is, the separation of religion from political power. This model of a secularist state protects the religious institutions from state interference, but with public religious expression to some extent frowned upon. We established this so government couldn't tell churches what to do which means that churches shouldn't be telling others what they should and should not to. This also dismisses any religion that isn't Christianity. The Republican keeps saying how they are the party of limited government. How is this not a complete government overreach. The discrimination some of the supporters they mentioned is what LGBTQ+ and people of color deal with every single day in this country. Clearly the GOP have an agenda to rid anyone who isn't white, straight, and Christian. That itself the Bible says is wrong.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DAVA-LEIGH BRUSH		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: dems22blue@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 5:29 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I urge opposition to this bill. It is unnecessary. We have the First Amendment of the US Constitution. Our Founding Fathers took care of freedom of religion. They did it because they did not want a state sponsored religion. This point seems to have been missed lately.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: GENEVIEVE STEIDTMANN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: genevieve@g-ink.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2024 9:25 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024	
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability			
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: HIRSH M. JOSHI		PHONE NUMBER: 608-256-8900	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION ACTION FUND		TITLE: PATRICK O'REILEY LEGAL FELLOW	
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 750			
CITY: MADISON		STATE: WI	ZIP: 53701
EMAIL: hjoshi@ffrf.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 12:00 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Dear Chair Richey and members of the Special Committee: I am writing on behalf of the FFRF Action Fund (FFRF AF) to voice opposition to House Bill 1959. FFRF AF is an affiliate of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, a national nonprofit organization with more than 40,000 members across the country, including nearly 500 members in Missouri. We work to ensure that our laws remain secular in order to protect the constitutional separation between state and church. HB 1959 prohibits public officials from issuing orders that have “the effect” of “limiting or prohibiting” religious services, worship, or congregation. HB 1959 also bars public officials from issuing orders that prohibit religious groups from meeting. No other groups are given the same benefit. Only religious groups are given the privilege of convening when a public official—neutrally and with extremely compelling reason—orders everyone not to. Under the First Amendment’s Free Exercise Clause, religious organizations are not exempt from generally applicable, neutral laws. See *Employment Div., Dep’t of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith*, 494 U.S. 872 (1990); *Reynolds v. U.S.*, 98 U.S. 145 (1878); *Davis v. Beason*, 133 U.S. 333, 348 (1890); *Minersville Dist. v. Gobitis*, 310 U.S. 586, 594 (1940). If religious organizations are targeted, in a non-neutral manner, then a Free Exercise issue arises. *Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye v. City of Hialeah*, 508 US 520 (1993). The freedom to believe is absolute, but the freedom to act is not. *Cantwell v. Connecticut*, 310 U.S. 296, 303-304 (1940); *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Org.*, 142 S. Ct. 2228, 2257 (2022) (“While individuals are certainly free to think and to say what they wish about ‘existence,’ ‘meaning,’ the ‘universe,’ and ‘the mystery of human life,’ they are not always free to act in accordance with those thoughts.”). “The right of private judgment has never yet been so exalted above the powers and the compulsion of the agencies of government. One who is a martyr to a principle—which may turn out in the end to be a delusion or an error—does not prove by his martyrdom that he has kept within the law.” *Hamilton v. Regents of the Univ. of California*, 293 U.S. 245 (1934) (Cardozo, J., concurring). HB 1959 gives religious organizations privileges that other groups do not have. HB 1959 “provide[s] [] church[es] with a legal weapon that no atheist or agnostic can obtain. This governmental preference for religion, as opposed to irreligion, is forbidden by the First Amendment.” *City of Boerne v. Flores*, 521 U.S. 507, 537 (1997) (Stevens, J., concurring) (citing *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38, 52-55 (1985)). HB 1959 makes governing during important times—like a pandemic—nearly impossible. See *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Ass’n.*, 485 U.S. 439, 452 (1988) (“...government simply could not operate if it were required to satisfy every citizen’s religious needs and desires.”). Missouri’s state constitutional provisions “‘declaring that there shall be a separation of church and state are not only more explicit but more restrictive’ than the First Amendment.” *Gibson v. Brewer*, 952 S.W.2d 239, 246 (Mo. banc 1997) (quoting *Paster v. Tussey*, 512 S.W.2d 97, 101-02 (Mo. banc 1974)). The Supreme Court of the United States’s decision in *Trinity*

Lutheran Church of Columbia, Mo., Inc. v. Comer, 137 S.Ct. 2012 (2017), did not change that. See Doe v. Marianist Province of U.S., 620 S.W.3d 73, 78 (Mo. banc 2021) (quoting Brewer and Paster). So, extra-constitutional rights that Missouri delegates to religious organizations are met with a higher level of scrutiny under Missouri's state Constitution than the First Amendment. Besides privileging the religious over the non-religious, HB 1959 allows religious groups to evade public health orders by merely claiming that they are religious in nature. It is unclear what constitutes a "religion." Thus, defying common sense public health orders, virtually any group can declare itself exempt under HB 1959. It is similarly vague as to what "has the effect of limiting" means. Conceivably, boil orders limit the use of water at religious meetings, violating HB 1959. Roadblocks limit the attendance and thoroughfares available to get to the meeting, violating HB 1959. Virtually any slight inconvenience caused by a neutral, generally applicable statute could be said to "have a limiting effect" on a religious meeting. So, HB 1959 should not be passed as it makes it difficult to govern at all. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I urge you to vote no on HB 1959. Any questions can be directed to me. Sincerely, Hirsh M. Joshi Patrick O'Reiley Legal Fellow Freedom From Religion Foundation



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KIMBERLY MAXWELL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: kcm Maxwell7@hotmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2024 9:35 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: LISA PANNETT		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: ARMORVINE		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 12:00 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024	
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MAGGIE EDMONDSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
REPRESENTING: ABORTION ACTION MISSOURI (FORMERLY PRO CHOICE MISSOURI)		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 1210 S VANDEVENTER AVE			
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63110
EMAIL: maggie@abortionactionmissouri.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 6:45 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MARY E. O'REILLY		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: maryeor@sbcglobal.net	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 9:39 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

The impetus for this bill is a threat to public health. There are many ways for people to express their religious beliefs and even to congregate (electronically, for instance - outdoors in public areas, for another) without exposing others or being exposed to life-threatening illness. None of those alternate means interfere in an individual's religious freedoms. I strongly urge the defeat of this bill.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024	
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: NIKOLAS NARTOWICZ		PHONE NUMBER: 202-466-3234	
REPRESENTING: AMERICANS UNITED FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE		TITLE: STATE POLICY COUNSEL	
ADDRESS: 1310 L ST. NW, STE. 200			
CITY: WASHINGTON		STATE: DC	ZIP: 20005
EMAIL: nartowicz@au.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/2/2024 2:24 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

On behalf of the Missouri members and supporters of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, we write to express our opposition to HB 1959, which would prohibit government officials from adopting any public health or emergency measures that limit religious services or meetings. We understand that in difficult times, many people look to their faith for comfort and guidance, but that does not mean religious organizations and services cannot or should not be regulated during an emergency. This bill should be rejected because it would create a dangerously broad religious exemption that would put the public health at risk and violate the U.S. Constitution. This Bill Is Unnecessary Federal law already protects the right of houses of worship and religious groups to hold religious services and meetings. Since the start of the pandemic, the U.S. Supreme Court issued several decisions holding that, under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the government can place limits on religious activities in emergency situations so long as such limitations are neutral and generally applicable or “narrowly tailored” to serve a “compelling” state interest. Religious organizations are also protected by the Missouri Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which prohibits the government from restricting the exercise of religion unless the restriction is generally applicable and does not discriminate against religion, is essential to furthering a compelling governmental interest, and is not unduly restrictive considering the relevant circumstances. Because these religious freedom protections already exist, there is no need for a new state law that would make it harder for government to protect the public health. HB 1959 Would Put the Public Health at Risk It is a fundamental responsibility of the government to protect the public during an emergency, including a pandemic. The blanket exemption in this bill, however, would tie the hands of Missouri officials from issuing emergency orders that restrict religious services or meetings, no matter the risk. This would have dire consequences for the public health and safety. Over the course of the pandemic, nearly two-thirds of the states temporarily suspended or limited all mass gatherings, including those at houses of worship. That is because, like any virus, COVID-19 is just as likely to spread at religious gatherings as at other gatherings. Indeed, an outbreak at a church in Independence infected 30 people and may have exposed more than 300 people to the virus. And Jackson County reported approximately 20 positive cases and nearly 80 people exposed at three area churches. Of course, there are many more examples from across the country that demonstrate that large in-person religious services, like other gatherings, can spread COVID-19. As new variants emerged, public health restrictions needed to change as well. Under HB 1959, however, state and local health officers would not be able to effectively respond to changing circumstances needed to prevent or stop the spread of any other disease that may be more contagious or more deadly than COVID-19. Although HB 1959 does not apply to evacuation orders involving certain natural disasters, it could be dangerous in non-pandemic scenarios as well. For example, if the state were hit by tornados or flooding, the governor would need to enforce orders that

keep all buildings in certain areas, including houses of worship, off limits because of damage even after evacuation orders end. HB 1959 would prohibit government officials from issuing such orders or from placing any limits on religious services or meetings. As a result, Missourians could get sick, injured, or worse. Targeting Religious Activities for Preferential Treatment Violates the U.S. Constitution

The U.S. Constitution prohibits the government from targeting religious activities for preferential treatment and exempting them from all emergency orders. Under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the government's ability to issue religious exemptions is not unlimited: "At some point, accommodation may devolve into an unlawful fostering of religion." To avoid a constitutional violation, a religious exemption "must be measured so that it does not override other significant interests" and may not "impose unjustified burdens on other[s]." In other words, when deciding whether to grant religious exemptions, the government is forbidden from granting a religious exemption that will harm others. This blanket exemption is not measured, and it takes no consideration into the harms the exemption could cause to others.

Conclusion Many faiths teach that in emergency circumstances, protecting people's lives comes first, and that it is an act of charity, justice, and love to stay home and to worship through alternative means. To protect people who attend religious worship services, as well as those who don't, we should encourage these efforts, not exempt religious organizations from emergency restrictions. Thank you for your consideration on this important matter.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: REBEKAH BERKOWITZ		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: rebek_b@sbcglobal.net	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 3:17 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

This leaves room for discrimination against any group the religious organization wants to. I believe in religious freedom but not at the expense of others.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024	
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: SAGE CORAM		PHONE NUMBER: 314-669-3425	
REPRESENTING: AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF MISSOURI		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 906 OLIVE ST., #1130			
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63101
EMAIL: scoram@aclu-mo.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2024 4:36 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Special Committee on Government Accountability Chairman Doug Richey Re: HB 1959 The American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri strives to safeguard the First Amendment’s guarantee of religious liberty. Missourians have both the right to religious belief and expression and the guarantee that the government will not favor particular faiths over others or prefer religion over non-religion. While HB 1959 includes carve outs for weather emergencies, civil unrest, and other situations, the language prohibiting orders that have “that effect of limiting or prohibiting” places of worship or religious groups from holding services and meetings is too broad. This proposed bill could impede the government’s ability to respond effectively to future pandemics or other public-health threats that endanger the lives of Missourians. As such, the ACLU of Missouri opposes HB 1959 and urges you to vote no on this bill.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SCOTT MCKELLAR		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: mck9@swbell.net	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/2/2024 11:56 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

This bill is a blatant attack on the health and safety of religious people, solely on the basis of their religious beliefs. It denies them the benefits of modern medicine and epidemiology, encouraging the unchecked spread of deadly contagion among their numbers. It will contribute to the continued decline of church attendance by the simple expedient of killing off the attendees. The parishioners so infected will pose a threat to everyone with whom they come in contact. They will become social pariahs whom sensible people will shun for their own safety. Only atheists and the unchurched will be regarded as acceptable company. Instead, perhaps you should forbid public health officials from shutting down Taylor Swift concerts.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1959		DATE: 2/5/2024
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Government Accountability		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SUSAN GIBSON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: Onesuegibson@protonmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/2/2024 8:08 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

This bill has the potential to endanger the public health.