



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1996		DATE: 2/20/2024	
COMMITTEE: Children and Families			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: ALEX EATON		PHONE NUMBER: 202-624-7769	
REPRESENTING: JUSTICE ACTION NETWORK		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 444 N. CAPITOL AVENUE			
CITY: WASHINGTON		STATE: DC	ZIP: 20001
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/20/2024 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



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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: 2/20/2024 8:41 PM	
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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 in support of HB 1996, sponsored by Representative Perkins, which would provide age protections for those under the age of 22 regarding the felony charge of distribution of a controlled substance in a protected location (including schools), and for the felony charge of manufacturing of a controlled substance. The criminal charge code lacks nuance, and context is rarely taken into consideration. HB 1996 provides this context in a critical way for young people charged with certain drug felonies. There is ample data that shows the relationship between age and criminal activity, indicating that the adolescent brain does not reach maturity until the mid to late 20s. While adults who have reached full brain development use the prefrontal cortex to make decisions, adolescents and young adults use the amygdala, which is responsible for impulsivity and failure to appreciate risks. HB 1996 acknowledges the reality that youthful offenders are operating with a significantly different brain chemistry. Reducing harsh punishment sanctions for certain drug crimes for those under the age of 22 means that these individuals have a better chance of turning their lives around and making better choices as they enter adulthood, rather than facing lengthy prison sentences for youthful mistakes and getting caught up in the vicious cycle of recidivism. HB 1996 sets an important precedent in taking age into consideration for felony offenses. Empower Missouri urges this committee to take action to pass HB 1996 into law. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.



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REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: JEFF SMITH		PHONE NUMBER: 314-323-0915	
REPRESENTING: CAMPAIGN ZERO		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 5380 MAGNOLIA			
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63139
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 2/20/2024 12:00 AM

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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: 2/20/2024 11:45 PM

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I am Opposed to this Bill and raising the age limit to 22 from 18. This is bad Public Policy and holding drug dealers accountable and responsible. Defeat this Bill.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: DARRELL L MOORE		PHONE NUMBER: 573-751-0619	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS; MISSOURI OFFICE OF PROSECUTION SERVICES.		TITLE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: 200 MADISON STREET, SUITE 1060			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65801
EMAIL: Darrell.Moore@prosecutors.mo.gov	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/20/2024 7:45 AM	
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This bill deals with serious drug offenses regarding the delivery/distribution, manufacture and trafficking of drugs in protected areas. There is no logical reason to treat violators different based on the age of the violator or the age of the person receiving the illegal drugs. This bill would minimize the seriousness of these offenses, especially at a time when we have ongoing major problems (overdoses and death) from the distribution/delivery, manufacture and trafficking of methamphetamine and fentanyl. We certainly do not need to encourage any delivery/distribution/manufacture/trafficking of drugs by any person near schools, colleges, parks, and other protected areas by anyone. Finally, we should not have multiple ages for criminal liability for criminal offenses. These offenses should not be treated differently than the rest of the criminal code.