



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2499		DATE: 1/31/2024
COMMITTEE: Emerging Issues		
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: 573-616-9860
REPRESENTING: JUSTICE ACTION NETWORK		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 444 N. CAPITOL AVENUE		
CITY: WASHINGTON		STATE: DC
		ZIP: 20001
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/31/2024 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: 1/31/2024 4:25 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 2499, sponsored by Representative Farnan, which expand eligibility for the A+ Scholarship Program to students currently deemed ineligible due to previous drug convictions. Investing in one's education is one of the most meaningful actions a person can take towards a better future. For those with past drug convictions who have struggled with addiction, the ability to pursue educational opportunities can mean the difference between moving forward or returning to their old habits. Comprehensive research has shown that education reduces recidivism rates: a 2023 meta-analysis found that participation in any educational program decreases the odds of recidivism by 17-19% on average, with enrollment in college reducing recidivism by 42.5%. Students looking to invest in their future should not be held back because of past mistakes. Empower Missouri urges this committee to take action to pass HB 2499 into law. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.



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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: MARK HABBAS		PHONE NUMBER: 314-393-9757
REPRESENTING: MO COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 205 E. CAPITOL AVE		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/31/2024 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: 1/31/2024 11:57 PM
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