

BILL NUMBER: HB 2777				DATE: 3/5/2024	
COMMITTEE: Elections and Elec	cted Officials				
TESTIFYING:	☑ IN SUPPORT OF	☐ IN OPPOSITION TO	☐FOR INFORM	MATIONAL PURPOSE	S
		WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:					
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C."HONES"	T-ABE" DIENOFF-STAT	E PUBLIC ADVOCATE	PHONE NUM	BER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATIO	DN NAME:		TITLE:		
ADDRESS:			<u>.</u>		
CITY:			STATE:	ZIP:	
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yah	oo.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person		SUBMIT DATE: 3/5/2024 11:34 PM	
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I am in Support of the Bill as we NEED to have a minim of Training Requirements and Professional Standards. For additional Testimony, please review the House "Media" under the House Elections Committee to view my Public Testimony.



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WITNESS NAME: BRANDI RAY			PHONE NUMB	ER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATIO	ON NAME:		TITLE:		
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EMAIL:		ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT D 3/5/202	ATE: 4 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

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WITNESS NAME: BRENT STIDHAM		PHONE NUMBER:			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:			
ADDRESS:		·			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:		
EMAIL: brentstidham10@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE 3/4/2024 1	0:37 PM		

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I am writing today in support of House Bill 2777, I am currently serving my first term as Coroner in Stoddard County Missouri. I am currently the youngest Coroner in the state of Missouri. Prior to my time as Coroner I served as a Missouri POST certified police officer since May 2013. While often forgotten, the Office of County Coroner is one of the most vital positions of government. Serving in this position requires you to be the last line of defense for the deceased, and a voice for those who no longer have one. The position of Coroner requires you to investigate any and all deaths that occur within your county. However, it is clear that is not the case in several counties throughout our great state. Unfortunately the position is often taken over by an individual who wins a popularity contest rather than someone who is qualified. My time as a Deputy Sheriff gave me the knowledge of how death investigations work, and gave me the experience to properly navigate the job. After three years in the position I am proud to say that Stoddard County runs one of the most efficient Coroner's offices in the State. Our office puts out an end of the year report to keep citizens informed of what our office is doing, the budget of our office, and death trends within our county. I have taken a proactive approach to mental health and substance abuse awareness, and our county has seen great improvements in those areas. While also finding ways to reduce cost and save taxpayers money. I am in agreement with House Bill 2777 requiring more training and qualifications for the position. It is imperative that death certificates across our state are accurate, and that no stone goes left unturned when a death occurs. When I took office I was offered little to no guidance. My ability to do the job came from my experience as a Deputy Sheriff as well as other Coroners across the state. I am a conservative Republican who believes in small government and does not think that the legislature should be interfering in County offices. However, the statutes regarding the Coroner system are broken, and have not been updated for several decades. It is my hope that the legislature will pass this bill to assist in funding training as well as increasing requirements to have the job. Respectfully, Brent Stidham Stoddard County



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INDIVIDUAL:				
WITNESS NAME: CHERYL REINAGE	EL		PHONE NUMI	BER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATIO	DN NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			·	
CITY:			STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: creinagel@semo.e	edu	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT 3/2/202	DATE: 24 10:09 PM

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My support, for this legislation, is summarized in one heartfelt sentence, liust want to make sure that no one else ever has to go through what we, and other families, have endured due to incompetent, inexperienced Missouri coroners. September 18, 20239:24 a.m.- 911 called for my brother, Thomas R. Nations, collapsed at home Transported to hospital by ambulance 10:37 a.m. - time of death at Southeast Hospital ER, Cape GirardeauApproximately two hours after his death, the Cape Girardeau County Coroner called to confirm with Tom's medical condition with his wife. The coroner mentioned diabetes and possible respiratory issue. Tom's widow informed the coroner that Tom was never diagnosed with diabetes. We contacted the funeral home, instructing them not to file the death certificate until the cause of death was corrected as shown on the Emergency Room report. The cause of death and underlying causes (from the Emergency Room Report)Chronic obstructive lung diseaseDyslipidemiaEnd-stage renal diseaseHTN (hypertension)Ischemic heart diseaseVery difficult to bag despite endotracheal intubation due to extensive pulmonary hemorrhage despite suctioning. My relentless pursuit of information regarding death certificate issues in the State of Missouri began when no death certificate, for my brother, was filed by the state mandated deadline of five days. I was appalled to learn, through researching news stories, that many Missouri county coroners have little-tono medical training and only a low percentage of these coroner offices are certified by accrediting organizations.?It was concerning to me that the only requirements to be elected as coroner are: 1. be a citizen of the United States 2. over the age of twenty-one years 3. shall have resided within the state one whole year 4. and within the county for which he is elected, six months next preceding the election. Source: Mo. Ann. Stat. § 58.030.Additional concerns arose when I found the article from February 2022 on the web site Missouri Independent ... The coroner — Wavis Jordan, a Republican who took office in January 2021 — has worked as a school security guard, hearse driver and funeral florist but has no prior training or experience handling the dead. He has a long-running policy of requiring families provide proof of a recent, positive PCR test of COVID-19 to his office before labeling a death COVID. which goes against CDC quidance. As a result, many likely COVID-19 deaths don't get counted as such. Put another way, the coroner "doesn't do Covid deaths," he told the Documenting COVID-19 project and the USA TODAY network for its series on death certificate inaccuracies called "Uncounted." I soon realized we were faced with a very serious problem. If the CDC couldn't force this coroner to report deaths correctly, how could we?It was also challenging to learn that the Cape Girardeau County Coroner only answers to the voters. No county official has any authority over one of the highest paid positions in the county. During a time when my focus should have been grieving the loss of my brother (my only remaining family member) I decided to do my very best to seek justice for our family, and to the other families impacted by incompetence of the coroner. The coroner repeatedly refused to put the correct information on Tom's death certificate, as reflected on the Emergency Room report. Our advocate, at the funeral home, contacted Tom's pulmonologist. He was very willing to file

the death certificate, listing pulmonary hemorrhage as cause of death with underlying causes listed as heart disease and renal failure. Date issued: November 13, 2023My brother proudly served in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War. I contacted these offices to express our concerns of the delay in getting a veteran's death certificate finalized — with the correct information.Cape Girardeau VA Office - Robert Fisher, VA Patient Advocate & Outreach/. Enrollment Coordinator Senator Holly Thompson RehderMO Office of Vital Records - Sebastian Starrett The coroner's offensive and harassing comment on October 19th, 2023, left me no choice but to file complaints with these county and state officials: Attorney General's Office - November 2023 Cape Girardeau County Commissioners -January 2024MO Board of Coroners & Medical Examiners Executive Directors - January 2024 In January 2024 I was interviewed by Carl Schwartze, the Attorney General's Office Investigator. It was a one-hour recorded interview regarding my brother and the coroner issues. After watching every coroner news story of KFVS-12's investigative reporter, Kathy Sweeney, I knew I had to something to make a difference. Listening to heartbreaking stories of families who lost a loved one and then dealing with significant coroner issues; seeing these families speak at an October 30th public forum hosted by the Cape Girardeau County Commissioners...all of this could have been preventable, in my opinion. It was so incredibly sad. How could this been preventable? The Coroner Standards and Training Commission never had enough members appointed to be able to convene. Hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars remain in this fund, derived from a small percentage of death certificate fees. Signed into law on Aug. 28, 2020, House Bill 2046 created the Coroner Standards and Training Commission within the Department of Health and Senior Services. After the commission develops new coroner standards, they will be published on a state website and coroners will not be able to assume office until the required training is completed and a certificate issued. Source: Missouri Independent February 1, 2022Mission: The Coroner Standards and Training Commissiin shall establish training standards, by rule, relating to the office of county coroner. These standards shall relate to the operation of the office, the legal responsibilities of the office, and the technical skills and knowledge required of the office. To me, it's such an injustice, and disservice, to the voters of Cape Girardeau County that these new coroner standards were not developed and implemented prior to Wavis Jordon assuming office in January 2021. I am very grateful to Representative John Voss for taking a leadership role in this important legislation. It's nearly been 79 years since Missouri Statue 58.030 became effective., on August 28, 1945. This antiquated statute must be revised and changes implemented. My friend. Linda, summarized it best, "It's an important change that needs to happen. Too many people have had issues at a time when people grieving should not have to deal with them. I'd never realized how important that position was until I saw how incompetence can hurt grieving families and not give them the answers they need. It has happened to so many families."Respectfully submitted, Cheryl A. Reinagel



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TESTIFYING:	✓ IN SUPPORT OF	☐ IN OPPOSITION TO		FORMATIO	NAL PURPOSES
		WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:					
WITNESS NAME: CHRISTY YOUNG	-CLOVER		PHON	IE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION	ON NAME:		TITLE	:	
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		WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:					
WITNESS NAME: DANA MUELLER			PHONE NUI	MBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATIO	ON NAME:		TITLE:		
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		WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:				
WITNESS NAME: DANIEL ROSE			PHONE NUME	BER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATIO	ON NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:				
CITY:			STATE:	ZIP:
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TESTIFYING:	☑ IN SUPPORT OF	☐ IN OPPOSITION TO	☐FOR IN	FORMATIC	NAL PURPOSES
		WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:					
WITNESS NAME: JENNY BLANKEN	SHIP		PHOI	NE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION	ON NAME:		TITLE	Ξ:	
ADDRESS:					
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	WITNESS NAI	ИE			
INDIVIDUAL:					
WITNESS NAME: LAUREN WESTRICH		PHONE NUM	IBER:		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:			
ADDRESS:					
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:		
EMAIL: westrichlauren@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT 3/4/20	DATE: 24 6:57 PM		

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I support having training for our coroners. I find it very unprofessional that our coroners can be anyone from the street and have to answer to no body. Due to this I have many un answered questions about my past love one. My mother. A daughter should not have to ask her self how her mom really died but here we are . Due to incompetence of having a coroner with no training, simple actions and proper steps were not taken. My mother's blood wasn't tested to see what was in her blood system evenafter we asked the coroner to do the test . That one simple test would have answered a lot of questions. There were items around the house that also should have been investigated but weren't . Particularly the medicine. She was even taken to the wrong funeral home and someone had to go get her. I am for having training for our coroners because I feel this will help ,from a situation like this, happening to another family again . Sincerely Lauren Westrich.



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		WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:					
WITNESS NAME: SCOTT BRANAM			PHONE NUME	BER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATIO	DN NAME:		TITLE:		
ADDRESS:			•		
CITY:			STATE:	ZIP:	
EMAIL: scottbranam1975@	@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT 0 3/4/202	OATE: 24 6:45 PM	
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I was appointed to fill the term of a coroner who had to step down for medical reasons. I was very fortunate to have been near neighboring county coroners who were able to guide me as each and every case presents itself with so many aspects of investigation. It is important that statewide Coroners be held accountable and also offered needed training and support.



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INDIVIDUAL:				
WITNESS NAME: STEPHEN MURRE	:LL		PHONE NUMB	ER:
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WITNESS NAME: STEPHEN R. SWO	BODA		PHONE NUME	BER:	
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	WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:				
WITNESS NAME: TERRY A. PARKER		PHONE NUMBER	:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:		
ADDRESS:				
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:	
EMAIL: taparker71@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DAT 3/4/2024 (E: 3:36 PM	

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As likely the longest tenured county coroner on the east and south side of the state. I cannot stress enough the importance of training and education as death investigation changes with each and every case that the coroner is involved in. Training in house to handle communication with a family, draw important toxicology as well as research in the medical history of a person are a must. Coroners in our state are not privy to much needed training before taking office after being elected. We do have a coroner association, but the training provided has always been geared more toward law enforcement. Not much needed hands on training needed to go out into the field and do a thorough job. However with this training will come with another side. Counties have to be willing to equip and provide needed resources. 80 percent of county coroners in Missouri are dependent on a funeral home to do their job, I went 20 years without even a vehicle provided by my county and after 22 years, still only draw a salary of 14,400 a year (thats 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) and have to almost beg for needed supplies. So, you can't really demand or expect training and not pay a decent wage and impress upon each county to provide needed materials and allow in the budget for needed testing. You would be shocked at counties that do not make room in the budget for such things. So yes, there should for sure be better training of County Coroners but there should also be a tough requirement for each county state wide to provided salary and resources



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WITNESS NAME: VICTORIA RESTIT	UYO		PHONE NUMB	ER:
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	WITNESS NAME		
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WITNESS NAME: WILLIE HARLOW		PHONE NUMB	ER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:		·	
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: w4harlow@sbcglobal.net	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT D 3/4/202	ATE: 4 3:16 PM
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As an elected coroner, in my 19th year of service, I am in full agreement with the need for training revisions, and for more stringent qualifications for the office of coroner. This particular bill, while I feel the intent is correct, is somewhat rushed and provides conflict with other statutes relating to the office of coroner and training requirements. I would suggest that the bill be slowed down and open dialogue with the Missouri Coroners and Medical Examiners Association to find out the best path forward to serve the citizens of Missouri.



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		WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZA	TION:			
WITNESS NAME: BENJAMIN PURSIFULL			PHONE NUME 417-350-0	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI CORONERS AN	ND MEDICAL EX	(AMINERS ASSOCIATIO	N MCMEA B	OARD MEMBER
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 701				
CITY: MARSHFIELD			STATE: MO	ZIP: 65706
EMAIL:		ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT 0 3/5/202	DATE: 24 12:00 AM
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BUSINESS/ORGANIZATIO	N:		
WITNESS NAME: DANIEL HEAVIN			NUMBER: 850-0505
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI CORONERS AND N	MEDICAL EXAMINERS ASS	SOCIATION TITLE: PRES	SIDENT
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 701			
CITY: MARSHFIELD		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65706
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		BMIT DATE: 5/2024 12:00 AM
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	WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: MICAHEL P. TAYLOR		PHONE NUMBE 417-859-427	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI CORONERS STANDARDS ANI	D TRAINING COMMISSION	TITLE: CHAIRMAN	
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 218			
CITY: Marshfield		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65706
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DA 3/5/2024	TE: 12:00 AM
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