

HCS HB 1457 -- JUDICIAL SECURITY

SPONSOR: Hinman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 10 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1457.

This bill amends the Judicial Privacy Act to replace the definition for "judicial officer" with a definition for "court-related officer", which includes various judges, prosecuting and circuit attorneys, circuit clerks, court administrators, deputy circuit clerks, division clerks, municipal clerks, and juvenile officers and chief deputy juvenile officers.

The definition of "written request" is amended to exclude a court-related officer's personal information. The bill specifies that the prohibition on a government agency publicly posting or displaying publicly available content of a court-related officer does not apply to a court-related officer's personal information that is included in any records of court proceedings of this State contained in any statewide court automation system.

This bill amends the offense of tampering with a judicial officer and the offense of tampering with a judicial proceeding to prohibit a person convicted of the offense or offenses from being eligible for parole, probation, or conditional release.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this is a slight change to the Judicial Privacy Act, which was passed in 2023. Judicial officers were inadvertently left off of the Act, and the judicial officers are the front-line administrators in the courts. These officers receive threats and have their home information shared when cases are not heard in a timely manner. The personal information of these judicial officers needs to be kept private so that bad actors cannot follow through on these threats. There were a couple of offenses that needed to be updated as far as the availability of probation or parole, so a couple of tampering offenses are being brought in line for consistency under this bill.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Hinman; Eric D. Jennings, Judicial Conference of Missouri; Jeff Chapple, O'Fallon Municipal Court.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that protections are getting ridiculous, because we need to be protecting all Missourians. There are already statutes to address the threats or other offenses committed against Missourians. No one should be making any threats or harassing anyone, but there are many other statutes allowing the bad actors to be prosecuted.

Testifying in person against the bill was Arnie Dienoff.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.