

HCS SS SB 66 -- PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, VULNERABLE PERSONS, AND ANIMALS

SPONSOR: McCreery

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 14 to 0.

Please see the summary sheet for a detailed list of the changes made in the House Committee Substitute for the Senate Bill.

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

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that while Missouri has made major strides to limit child marriage, over 300 minors were entered into marriages in this state between 2019 and 2023, with parents playing a crucial role in facilitating these marriages. This is traumatic and disempowering to the minor child, who must wait until reaching 18 years of age to unlock critical legal protections in order to get themselves out of situations such as this.

Testifying in person for the bill were Senator McCreery; Arnie C. Dienoff; Unchained At Last; Brandi Dredge; MO Network Against Child Abuse; Lauren A Van Wagoner; Michele Hanash, AHA Foundation; Presley Van Wagoner; Holly Thompson Rehder; Matthew Huffman, Missouri Coalition Against Domestic And Sexual Violence; and Sheena Eastburn, Unchained At Last.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say cases of teen homelessness are higher for those who married as minors, and the dependence on the spouse limits the minor's ability to leave the situation.

Testifying in person on the bill was Christopher Wielga, Most Policy Initiative.

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.