



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 124		DATE: 3/26/2025	
COMMITTEE: Judiciary			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF STATE PUBLIC ADV		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 3/26/2025 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: KIRSTEN DUNHAM		PHONE NUMBER: 573-442-0116	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MID-MISSOURI LEGAL SERVICES		TITLE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: 117 N. GARTH			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65203
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/26/2025 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MARK RHOADS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-645-0505	
REPRESENTING: LEGAL SERVICES OF MISSOURI		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: P O BOX 1162			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65102
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/26/2025 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: MEGHAN WHEELER		PHONE NUMBER: 417-881-1397	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: LEGAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN MISSOURI		TITLE: ATTORNEY	
ADDRESS: 3130 S DELAWARE AVE			
CITY: SPRINGFIELD		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65802
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/26/2025 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: PAULA S. GREEN		PHONE NUMBER: 417-881-1397	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: LEGAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN MISSOURI		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 3031 S. DELAWARE AVE.			
CITY: SPRINGFIELD		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65804
EMAIL: paula.green@lsosm.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2025 4:30 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

My name is Paula Green. I am a senior attorney at Legal Services of Southern Missouri. I want to thank you for the opportunity to share with the Committee some of the work we do. One of the many services we provide relates to housing, which is my area of practice. My clients are, by and large, facing potentially life-altering circumstances that put their health and safety at risk. In many cases, they are the victims of unscrupulous property owners who feel safe ignoring their legal obligations because they know the victims cannot afford to hire an attorney to enforce the rights that this very body has afforded them. First, please listen to the story of Sarah, who, for five years, rented a home for herself, her young son and her elderly, oxygen-dependent uncle. During her tenancy, the landlord raised the rent several times mid-term, and sued to evict her when she could not pay the last unlawful rent increase. We defended her in this lawsuit and the judge ruled in her favor. But Sarah's story does not end there. While she was paying these ever increasing monthly rents, she was also living in horrible conditions. The roof leaked and the electrical system was a hazard. But the worst condition was the plumbing. The sewer pipe was blocked, and backed up into the basement on a regular basis. At one point, Sarah had over 6 inches of raw sewage sitting in her basement. For five years, Sarah had to manually clean and remove human waste from her basement on a weekly basis. You may be asking yourselves "why would anyone stay there?" The answer is she had nowhere else to go. With limited funds, a poor credit score and an uncle with a eviction on his record, it took Sarah years to find someplace that would accept her and her family as a tenant. We sued and Sarah was awarded a \$25,000 judgment from this landlord. This was life-changing money for Sarah, but it also sent a message to this landlord and others like him that taking advantage of people can get very expensive. Another client, Beth and her two small children, rented a home without a working furnace. Despite multiple pleas, her landlord refused to fix the furnace, telling Beth to put space heaters around the home instead. Within 24-hours of receiving a letter from Legal Services, the landlord had someone installing a temporary heat source and the furnace was repaired within a week. Finally, Mark is a client who had fallen behind on rent due to a temporary disruption in delivery of his disability benefits. His landlord had filed suit for rent and possession and was prepared to evict Mark from his home. He had nowhere to go and would have been living on the streets. We worked with the landlord's attorneys to delay trial while we helped Mark secure some rental assistance to pay all of the past-due rent, we created a payment plan to reimburse the landlord's attorney fees, and, most importantly, Mark was able to stay in his home. This was a win for everyone involved. These are just three of many stories of people whose lives, without Legal Services, would have been markedly worse and the reasons why I am so very proud of the work that my colleagues and I are doing.