

HB 1792 -- PILOT PROGRAM FOR MEDIA LITERACY AND CRITICAL THINKING

SPONSOR: Murphy

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 15 to 0.

This bill establishes the "Media Literacy and Critical Thinking Act". The bill defines "media literacy" to include concepts such as, but not limited to: an individual's ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and participate with all forms of media, including news in print and social media content, and recognize bias and stereotypes in media, as well as Internet safety.

This bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish a "Media Literacy and Critical Thinking" Pilot Program for the 2027-28 and 2028-29 school years. Between five and seven diverse schools will be selected by DESE to participate in the Pilot Program as specified in the bill.

The Program will address media literacy, develop strategies for student learning in classroom curricula, and demonstrate various literacy strategies used.

Pilot Program schools must provide a report to DESE before August 1, 2029, and before January 1, 2030, DESE must compile and submit a summary report to the General Assembly.

The Pilot Program terminates June 30, 2029. This section expires December 31, 2029.

This bill is similar to HB 1513 (2024) and HB 116 (2025).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that something must be done to help the children manage the way that they receive information in the new digital age. Students need to learn that what they see and hear is being shown to them in order to influence them one way or another. This would be a pilot program with the purpose of teaching our children to internalize critical thinking. The ability to verify information is what's important. This bill is sorely needed.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Murphy; Missouri State Teachers Association; Missouri National Education Association; Arnie Dienoff; and Missouri Press Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

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.