

HB 2109 -- VICTIMS OF CRIME

SPONSOR: Roberts

This bill places certain requirements on "family justice centers", which are multiagency, multidisciplinary centers in which governmental and nongovernmental organizations provide services to people seeking assistance due to victimization resulting from domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, child abuse or neglect, abuse of an eligible adult, or human trafficking. The bill describes types of entities or individuals that constitute a family justice center. A city, county, or nonprofit agency can establish a family justice center collectively or individually.

Employees or volunteers of a family justice center will be incompetent to testify at trial about certain confidential information unless the confidentiality requirements are waived in writing by the person being served by the center. A person providing services at a family justice center will not be liable for civil damages while he or she is acting in the scope of his or her duties if the person is acting in good faith.

The bill also amends the offense of tampering with a witness or victim by specifying that a person convicted of the offense will not be eligible for probation, conditional release, or suspended imposition or execution of sentence.

The legislature intends to reject or abrogate earlier case law, including the 2008 Missouri Appeals Court case State v. Owens, that requires the State to prove the underlying criminal offense in order to prove the offense of tampering with a witness or victim under section 575.270.