

HCS HB 2418 -- CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE

SPONSOR: Loy

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 9 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 2418.

This bill creates the "Missouri Crime Victims Fund", which will be a dedicated fund. The funds will be disbursed to entitlement jurisdictions, eligible entities, or local government entities that are eligible for victim assistance grants under Federal law and related regulations, and the eligible jurisdictions and entities will use the funds for the same purposes as those jurisdictions or entities can use the grants under Federal law and related regulations. Such purposes include victim support services, such as lost wages, counseling, and medical costs.

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 victim services are not optional. This legislation is critically important to ensure continued access to lifesaving support. Further cuts to funding could significantly impact services. Missouri is one of the top ten worst states for domestic violence, and violence does not pause during fiscal uncertainty. Failing to alleviate funding issues could leave hundreds of thousands of victims without services. The bill does not mandate or appropriate any funding. It allows the State to plan thoughtfully versus reacting.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Loy; Courtney Thomas, Newhouse; Jessica Hill, Missouri Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence; Arnie Dienoff; Cara Gerdiman, Kid's Harbor, Inc., Kid's Harbor, Too ; Gina Clement, Capital City Court Appointed Special Advocates; Missouri Network Against Child Abuse; Kathleen Croker, Russell House, Response to Domestic and Sexual Violence; Leanne Reese, Missouri Court Appointed Special Advocate Association; Missouri Office of Prosecution Services; Missouri Association of Prosecuting Attorneys; and Jessica Woolbright, Saint Martha's.

OPPONENTS: 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.