



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1628		DATE: 1/13/2026	
COMMITTEE: Higher Education and Workforce Development			
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 ADVO		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: In-Person		SUBMIT DATE: 1/13/2026 11:28 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am in full Support of this Bill to remove outdated and unneeded programs, update Titles within the Department and to clean up much needed Statues within the Department.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: LEAH STRID		PHONE NUMBER: 573-751-6561	
REPRESENTING: MO DEPT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 301 W. HIGH ST.			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/13/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 1/13/2026 5:53 PM
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I submit this testimony in opposition to HB 1628.

While workforce development and job training are legitimate policy goals, public education should not be structured primarily as a pipeline for immediate labor market needs. Education's core purpose is to cultivate curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, civic understanding, and intellectual growth — not to pre-assign children to economic roles.

HB 1628 places an outsized emphasis on aligning education with workforce demand, advisory boards, career readiness frameworks, and labor market projections. This approach risks narrowing educational focus too early, particularly for children and adolescents who are still discovering their interests, aptitudes, and capacities.

Children thrive when given:

intellectual freedom,
exposure to diverse disciplines,
time to develop curiosity and self-direction,
and an environment that values growth over productivity.

When education is driven by workforce metrics, grant incentives, and demand-occupation targets, it can unintentionally:

prioritize short-term labor needs over long-term human development,
undervalue the arts, humanities, and exploratory learning,
channel students prematurely into predefined tracks,
and treat children as future workers rather than developing citizens and thinkers.

Workforce training has an appropriate place after foundational education — through voluntary programs, adult education, apprenticeships, community colleges, and employer-based training. It should supplement, not shape, the core mission of education.

For these reasons, I oppose HB 1628 and urge the committee to preserve education as a space where children are supported in discovering what they are naturally good at and capable of achieving — rather than being steered by shifting workforce demands.

Thank you for considering this testimony.