



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1699		DATE: 4/1/2026	
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Rural Issues			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. A.C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER: 314-440-9000	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCACY		TITLE: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1535			
CITY: O'FALLON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63366
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/1/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



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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: 4/1/2026 8:30 AM	

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HB 1699 modifies provisions relating to the appointment and continuity of county health officers, raising constitutional and structural concerns regarding the stability, independence, and uniformity of public health authority.

Under the bill, county commissions are granted broad discretion to decline reappointment of an existing county health officer and to install interim officers without clearly defined standards, qualifications, or limitations on duration. This creates a framework in which the continuity of a position responsible for enforcing state health laws may be subject to discretionary interruption rather than objective criteria or performance-based review.

The absence of statutory guardrails governing removal, non-reappointment, or interim appointment introduces a structure in which the exercise of public health authority may be altered or redirected without transparent justification or procedural consistency. Where an office carries enforcement authority affecting the public at large, such discretion raises due process concerns related to arbitrary or uneven application of the law.

Additionally, the bill permits interim appointments without establishing defined qualifications, oversight standards, or temporal limits, despite such appointees potentially exercising the full powers of a county health officer. This raises concerns regarding delegation of governmental authority without sufficient safeguards to ensure competency, accountability, or continuity of enforcement practices.

HB 1699 further preserves a framework in which counties are not required to appoint a county health officer at all, while maintaining that the duties of the office remain tied to enforcement of state health laws and regulations. This creates a patchwork system of public health governance, where similarly situated populations may experience materially different levels of oversight and enforcement depending on local discretionary decisions.

Taken together, these provisions establish conditions under which public health authority may be reconfigured, paused, or reassigned without clearly articulated standards, raising concerns regarding consistency, predictability, and the integrity of enforcement across jurisdictions.

Bottom line:

HB 1699 introduces a structure that allows for discretionary disruption and reassignment of public health authority without sufficient statutory safeguards.

The General Assembly is hereby placed on notice that enactment of this provision may give rise to constitutional concerns, including due process implications, arbitrary or inconsistent execution of public health laws, and unequal protection resulting from non-uniform enforcement across counties.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ABIGAIL HERNDON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/1/2026 11:46 AM
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