



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1714		DATE: 1/28/2026	
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			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC "HONEST ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: BOB BAKER		PHONE NUMBER: 314-361-3944
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI ALLIANCE FOR ANIMAL LEGISLATION		TITLE:
ADDRESS: PO BOX 4309		
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63123
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: DAVID PARRISH		PHONE NUMBER: 573-767-5311
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: LEWIS COUNTY SHERIFF's OFFICE		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 107 SOUTH WASHINGTON STREET		
CITY: MONTICELLO		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63457
EMAIL: dparrish@lewiscosheriff.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 9:53 AM

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Current law prevents rural law enforcement, especially county sheriffs, from holding dog owners accountable when they have aggressive dogs that have not actually bitten a human being. While the dangerous dog statute provides for very serious consequences, I believe a change in the animal neglect statute, especially as it relates to animal control, will allow law enforcement to intervene sooner, and prevent injury to other human beings and other animals.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JEROD WELKER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/25/2026 6:59 PM
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I was attacked and nearly killed by three loose pit bulls at South Park in Quincy, IL almost 2 years ago on St. Patrick's Day. I ended up in the ICU for 3 nights in a ventilator. There are many more details to go along with this. However, the dog owners were only fined around \$250-\$300 per dog or maybe less than that. They had no insurance and I had \$150,000 in medical bills. I can provide any and all information evidence to back this event up. Nothing is being done about this in Quincy, IL. The police don't take the issue seriously.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SUSAN ANN WELKER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: VIRGIL NOLAN WELKER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 1/27/2026 2:35 PM	
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My wife and I are very much in support of the proposed HB 1714, particularly regarding pet owners having "adequate control" over their animals, due to our family experience. On March 17, 2024, Jerod Welker, age 36, our youngest son was attacked by 3 pit bulls while walking in a city park in Quincy, Illinois. The park is a very popular walking area for Quincy residents and also has a grassy area across a creek that some people go to walk as it is more of a nature trail. Our son was in this area when the attack happened. It was a cool day with temperatures in the 30's and our son decided to take a late afternoon walk in the park. He had headphones on listening to music when he turned and 3 pit bulls attacked him. They ended up tearing all of his clothing off except for his shoes, and he had bites, scratches, scrapes, and bruises all over his body. He fought them off as much as he could and tried to get back to a more traveled area of the park, the whole time yelling for help. He made it probably 100-150 yards and closer to the paved trail but ran out of energy just down a hill from the paved area. Thankfully, someone in a house, across the street from the area he was walking in, saw a naked man running with 3 dogs chasing him and called 911. Police responded to the call and found our son lying face down on the ground with the 3 dogs circling him. The two police officers were not able to get to our son immediately, and in fact did not know if he was alive until they saw him move one of his legs, as the dogs were not letting them approach him, so they had to wait for other police, and animal control, to arrive to distract the dogs to another area. They had also called an ambulance to respond. Once they could get to our son he was taken to Blessing Hospital in the ambulance with very serious injuries. Later, a doctor informed us that if our son had not gotten to the hospital when he did, he likely would not have made it much longer. Once at the hospital, he was soon put on a ventilator, which he was on for 3 days, as they were afraid his airway may swell shut. Jerod was also experiencing kidney failure as a result of the soft tissue damage, and he had a concussion from the dogs grabbing his hair and shaking his head. He ended up losing a lot of hair that day as we found a "ball" of it near the site later. They were also concerned of possible vein damage in his neck area so a CT scan was run to check that. If it would have been, they were going to have to fly him to a Springfield, IL hospital to reach a vascular surgeon. Fortunately, it was not damaged enough for that to occur. Jerod had injuries all over his body, including losing a part of one ear. With it being dog bites, and the risk of infection from this, they did not stitch any of the wounds other than a couple of serious gashes in his head, which they stapled. He was immediately put on high doses of antibiotics to fight infection. Jerod ended up spending 3 days/nights in the ICU and a total of 5 nights in the hospital. He then recovered at home, with assistance for another week or more, and was able to return to work 3-4 weeks after his attack. It is likely that if he would not have been in very good physical condition before the attack, the outcome may have very well been different.

The reason for our support of this bill and adding the "adequate control" is the dogs that attacked our son were not controlled by their owner. While they had been reported as being out earlier that day, it

was not the first time they had been loose. Looking at the dog owner's Facebook page, we noticed she reported the dogs missing several times in the 3 months prior to Jerod's attack. This attack was almost deadly. Pet owners have an obligation to provide adequate care and adequate control of their pets, and we feel there should be penalties for those who don't do that.

In addition, my wife has been bitten twice by a neighbor's dog that was not on a leash, as required by city ordinances, and we had our own dog (Maltese) attacked by a German Shepherd that was not on a leash and our dog required emergency surgery.

While we are not opposed to dogs as pets, as we have had dogs as pets ourselves, and know there are many benefits to having pets, we do feel that owners should be required to care and control their dogs/pets so as not to endanger others around them, or their pet, as well.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: VIRGIL WELKER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KORTNIE HUDDLESTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 10:34 PM	

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While we agree that animal neglect is abhorrent and should be penalized, we oppose HB1714 because it prioritizes a punitive, carceral approach over addressing root causes and ensuring animal welfare.

The bill escalates penalties to felony levels, which will disproportionately impact low-income and working-class Missourians. For many, the inability to provide “adequate care” stems from systemic poverty, lack of access to affordable veterinary services, and economic despair—not malice. This legislation would criminalize poverty, funneling more vulnerable people into a broken criminal justice system without providing resources or support to prevent neglect in the first place.

Furthermore, the bill fails to mandate or fund community-based solutions. Where are the provisions for subsidized veterinary care, low-cost pet food programs, or public education? Where is the investment in animal control and shelter systems to humanely intervene? Instead, this bill offers only fines and imprisonment, which do nothing to help animals currently suffering and may even discourage people from seeking help for fear of prosecution.

We need a compassionate, preventative approach that strengthens social services and community support networks. We urge a “no” vote on this bill and call for the development of true animal welfare legislation that addresses systemic causes and offers help, not just handcuffs.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL DREYER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 10:32 PM
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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: 1/26/2026 3:22 PM	

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HB 1714 is presented as a public-safety measure. In practice, it is another example of Missouri legislating financial extraction and criminal escalation in place of precise lawmaking.

This bill does not meaningfully clarify what constitutes “adequate care” or “adequate control.” Instead, it dramatically increases criminal exposure, restitution obligations, and felony liability based on outcomes that may be indirect, unforeseeable, or unrelated to intent.

The statute expands punishment while leaving standards intentionally vague—an approach that invites selective enforcement rather than justice.

Most concerning is the bill’s quiet transformation of animal neglect into a proxy liability statute.

Under HB 1714, an animal owner can face felony charges not for willful cruelty, but because an animal’s actions resulted in property damage, injury, or death—regardless of whether the owner’s conduct was reckless, unavoidable, or already addressed through civil remedies.

This is not accountability. This is outcome-based punishment without proportional fault.

The legislature chose to remove judicial discretion to waive penalties where permanent remedies have been made, while simultaneously layering mandatory cost recovery, cleanup expenses, and public-health mitigation fees. The result is a statute that functions less as animal protection and more as a revenue and leverage mechanism.

And the contrast is impossible to ignore.

This body has demonstrated greater precision, urgency, and punitive clarity for animals than it routinely affords to children harmed by neglect, abuse, or systemic failure. When children are involved, investigations stall accountability.

When animals are involved, penalties accelerate.

That disparity is not accidental. It reflects priorities.

If the goal were genuinely animal welfare, this bill would define standards clearly, distinguish neglect from misfortune, and preserve proportional judicial discretion.

Instead, HB 1714 expands punishment first and asks questions later.

Missouri does not need broader crimes with blurrier definitions. It needs laws that govern behavior—not laws that monetize outcomes.

For these reasons, HB 1714 should not advance.

This bill replaces clear standards with escalating penalties, effectively converting animal ownership into strict liability whenever an outcome offends the state.

-Rev. Berry



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: KAREN STRANGE		PHONE NUMBER: 573-480-2389	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI FEDERATION OF ANIMAL OWNERS/PROFESSIONAL HOUNDSMAN OF MISSOURI		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 554			
CITY: ELDON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65026
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: TONY DUGGER		PHONE NUMBER: 417-259-1915	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF SPORTING DOGS		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 731 W. MAIN			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65102
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM	
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