



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1802		DATE: 2/24/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elections			
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: ALI GRAEFF		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 8:19 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Passing this legislation is absolutely critical for safeguarding our democracy. In the 2024 general election, St. Charles County, Missouri, saw a staggering 76,338 votes cast during the early voting period—representing about 25% of the total turnout in a county with over 300,000 registered voters. Yet, under current Missouri law, this massive volume of ballots was processed without any independent oversight from poll watchers or challengers, leaving the entire operation solely in the hands of the election director and staff. A recent lawsuit attempting to require such observers during early voting was dismissed, highlighting the glaring gap in accountability that exists today. Transparency isn't just a buzzword—it's the foundation of trust in our electoral system. Without watchers and challengers present to monitor the process, we risk errors, irregularities, or worse going unchecked. States with robust observer protocols have shown higher public confidence in results, and Missouri must join them to ensure every vote is counted fairly and accurately. This isn't partisan; it's about protecting the integrity of elections for all.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: AMY DECLUE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 12:54 PM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ANNETTE SIEVE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 1:01 PM	
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I support election oversight.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. A.C. "HONEST ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER: 314-440-9000	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI STATE PUBLIC ADVOCACY		TITLE: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1535			
CITY: O'FALLON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63366
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: BRENDA HOPFER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 1:10 PM	
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I agree and support this bill



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: BYRON KEELIN		PHONE NUMBER: 314-402-0655	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: FREEDOM PRINCIPLE		TITLE: PRESIDENT	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 2			
CITY: BALLWIN		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63022
EMAIL: freedomprinciplemo@protonmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 7:03 AM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

The Freedom Principle strongly supports House Bill 1802 because it is a crucial step toward ensuring greater integrity and transparency in Missouri's elections. In recent years, public confidence in the electoral process has been challenged, and one of the best ways to reassure voters is to provide clear, standardized rules about who can observe elections and how they are appointed. By establishing a consistent process for selecting challengers and watchers and expanding their ability to monitor both in-person and absentee voting, this bill helps provide critical oversight at every stage of the voting process. The requirement for official designation forms and timely notification balances the need for security with opportunities for meaningful observation. Additionally, putting the responsibility on local election authorities to verify eligibility ensures that only qualified individuals are given this important role, reducing the risk of disruption or interference from unqualified parties. Importantly, HB 1802 recognizes the reality of modern elections, with high numbers of absentee voters, by including observation in those processes as well. This legislation gives both political parties and the public greater assurance that elections are conducted fairly and accurately, fostering trust, accountability, and citizen engagement. We urge swift passage of HB 1802 to safeguard the integrity of Missouri's democratic process.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DARLENE BROOMAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 1:28 PM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JACKIE PECK		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 12:11 PM	
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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: JEN BERNSTEIN		PHONE NUMBER: 314-277-9080
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN ST. LOUIS		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 14684 LOS PADRES COURT		
CITY: CHESTERFIELD		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63017
EMAIL: jbernstein@ncjwstl.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 12:04 PM

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Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony in support of HB 1802 My name is Jen Bernstein and I am the Director of Advocacy at National Council of Jewish Women St. Louis (NCJWSTL). NCJWSTL is a non-profit organization in metropolitan St. Louis, representing over 5,000 members and supporters throughout the state. We focus our work on community service, advocacy, education and philanthropy to improve the quality of life for women, children and families while supporting individual and civil rights, and have been doing so since 1895.

HB 1802 strengthens transparency by allowing election challengers to be present whenever ballots are being cast, helping ensure that the process is open and accountable. When trained challengers are able to observe consistently, it builds confidence that elections are being conducted fairly and according to the law. Transparency is essential to public trust, and allowing appropriate observation helps reassure voters that the system is working as intended.

HB 1802 also helps ensure consistency and clarity by allowing challengers to perform their role without unnecessary restrictions or gaps in access. When all sides have confidence that the process is being conducted properly, it strengthens the credibility of election outcomes. Supporting this bill reinforces Missouri's commitment to fair, transparent, and trustworthy elections.

NCJWSTL urges you to vote yes on HB 1802.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JUDI GAMBINO		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 8:43 PM
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I feel like this is a great start to the election issues we have had and still do have.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KRISTI L BRANSTETTER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 10:10 PM

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I support it as long as the watchers do NOT interfere with people like myself who do no-excuse absentee voting. And those observers must be impartial.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KURT BAHR		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LISA E GORE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 6:39 AM	
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There is no reason for us to not have oversight in all phases and in all elections in the state of Missouri. In Boone County we were the only county allowed to have watchers and challengers for the 2024 presidential election early absentee voting phase. St Charles wouldn't allow them even with a court order and fought against them. This was entirely ludicrous because the law said anytime votes are counted but Kurt Bahr said that early absentee voting phase didn't count for that. If you have transparency and have nothing to hide, watchers and challengers should be there every step of the way. Please pass this bill. I have been our election verification chair since 2024 and we did find irregularities that were turned in and ignored. At least we tried. If a ballot cast before Election Day counts the same as a ballot on Election Day, why wouldn't you allow watchers and challengers at all phases and in all elections? If this doesn't pass we will know that legislators do not care about election integrity and President Trump will also know Missouri lawmakers do not care about Election Integrity so will our constituency.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: TRAVIS HEINS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 8:09 AM	

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I fully support this legislation as written. HB 1802 clarifies the language that Challengers and Watchers are to be allowed during early voting. The current language has caused a lot of confusion across the state in recent elections because some counties were allowing poll watchers/challengers while others were not. HB 1802 makes it clear in plain language.

- Poll watchers/challengers are a critical piece of the election integrity structure for Missouri
- Allowing poll watchers & challengers during early voting means any issues can be identified and corrected earlier in the election process.
- every piece of what Missouri has identified as an election security measure needs to be available for every day that ballots are being cast. It's common sense.
- This language correction will help clerks navigate statute without putting themselves at risk for litigation by misinterpretation or misapplication of the law; as this is written plainly.

My only suggestion would be to take some thoughtful consideration to include 2nd and 3rd class counties in some capacity, although I'm not sure what that would entail.

Please support HB 1802



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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: 2/24/2026 11:58 AM
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This is a duplicate of HJR 23 as back up in case either fail to pass. They are both unnecessary and not needed. This is due to a personal issue between St. Charles County Republican Central Committee and the election authority. This is retaliation for a dismissed lawsuit and to interfere with our free and fair elections.



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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: 2/23/2026 5:23 PM
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Are already laws and don't need to be repealed. The laws were updated already in 2022 by the mass Republican majority, this is unnecessary and waste of tax dollars. This is a personal vendetta of a committeeman for the St. Charles County Republican Central Committee.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JAMES MICHAEL SORRELL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 9:57 AM
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This has been proven over the past many elections to be unnecessary.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MONICA M HUDDLESTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 10:44 AM

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Allowing observers/challengers into the polls on election day only is enough. I am not in favor of such 'oversight' beyond election day as such can be seen as intimidation of voters at worst, making them uncomfortable at least. No need for that kind of potential harassment. Please vote NO on this bill.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: NANCY COPENHAVER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 9:52 AM	

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Although I understand the reasons the Representative wishes to go with the substitute bill from last year which allows poll watchers and challengers during the no excuse absentee period to only apply to first class and charter counties, I feel this is an unfair application of election law. I realize that this would present a problem for many third-class counties with very limited space, but would hope that a solution could be found that would make this proposed change applicable across the board in the state.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: RILEY MCEVOY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2026 2:05 AM
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Personally this expansion of poll watching days. seems excessive, I freely admit I am some what uneducated on this matter. But going from a day at the polls to about a week of monitoring seems like it could cause problems



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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: 2/24/2026 8:57 AM	

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I submit opposition to HB 1802 because it materially expands the duration, scope, and operational footprint of partisan-designated challengers and watchers inside sensitive election environments (polling places, absentee voting locations, and absentee counting locations), in a way that foreseeably increases voter intimidation risk, burdens election administration, and invites constitutional and federal-law conflicts without a demonstrated necessity.

1) Foreseeable voter-intimidation and access burdens (constitutional + federal risk)

HB 1802 authorizes challengers to be present “while ballots are cast” on election day and, in certain counties, throughout the absentee voting period, and authorizes watchers to remain through closeout procedures and to be present during absentee ballot preparation and counting.

That level of sustained, partisan presence in high-friction spaces predictably chills participation—especially for disabled voters, first-time voters, and voters with limited English proficiency—regardless of whether any individual watcher intends intimidation.

Missouri has a compelling interest in orderly elections, but expanding partisan access in this manner risks crossing the line from “observation” to deterrence, creating exposure under:

First and Fourteenth Amendment protections against undue burdens on the franchise (the Anderson–Burdick framework).

Federal Voting Rights Act protections that prohibit voter intimidation, threats, or coercion in connection with voting.

2) Unequal geographic treatment and targeted operational expansion

The bill specifically extends challenger presence into the absentee voting period in first class and charter counties, i.e., the most populous jurisdictions. That kind of jurisdiction-classification approach invites equal protection challenges if the practical effect is to heighten surveillance-like partisan presence in certain communities while leaving others unchanged—particularly where the State cannot show a concrete, evidence-based need tied to those jurisdictions.

3) Administrative burden and conflict escalation inside polling places

HB 1802 adds a formal pre-clearance/sign-off workflow for challenger and watcher designation forms, replacement deadlines, and substitutions. In practice, this increases administrative load on local election authorities immediately before elections—precisely when staffing, training, equipment testing, and ballot chain-of-custody tasks peak.

**More challengers for longer periods also increases the probability of:
Disruptions at check-in and ballot-issuance points,
Escalations around ID challenges,
Interference with election judges' ability to manage lines and resolve routine issues quickly.**

Even with language that challenges “may only be made” when a challenger “believes” laws were/will be violated, that standard is subjective and invites conflict, not clarity.

4) The bill is not narrowly tailored to a demonstrated problem

If the goal is improved transparency, Missouri can accomplish that with nonintrusive, standardized administrative guidance (space rules, conduct rules, training requirements, caps based on facility size, enforceable removal procedures, uniform county application), without statutorily expanding partisan presence during the act of voting and through extended absentee windows.

For these reasons, HB 1802 should not be enacted.

Legislative Notice:

By expanding and prolonging partisan challenger/watcher presence in voting and absentee-processing environments, HB 1802 foreseeably increases voter-chilling effects, raises equal-protection concerns through differential county treatment, and heightens exposure to federal anti-intimidation protections and constitutional vote-burden claims, while also increasing operational burdens and conflict risk for election authorities. The General Assembly is on notice that these predictable effects can generate preventable litigation and administrative failures absent narrow tailoring and evidence-based safeguards.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SUSAN GIBSON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2026 8:51 PM

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That's voter intimidation, plain and simple. As far as ballot counting, real patriots join in the work rather than just show up to watch others work.