



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1868		DATE: 4/7/2026
COMMITTEE: Crime and Public Safety		
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: ANNETTE SIEVE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 9:51 PM
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: BRENT HEMPHILL		PHONE NUMBER:	
REPRESENTING: MO AMBULANCE ASSN		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: POB 156			
CITY: JC		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: DAVID J KLARICH		PHONE NUMBER: 314-560-1616	
REPRESENTING: METRO WEST FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT; ROBERTSON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT		TITLE: ATTORNEY	
ADDRESS: 438 GATEFORD DRIVE			
CITY: BALLWIN		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63021
EMAIL: dklarich@sbcglobal.net	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 4:21 PM	
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DEANNA RHODES-WIDMER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2026 7:00 PM
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Please support this bill. My son is KCFD and I've heard some terrible stories. Then the awful tragedy of Graham a KCFD paramedic that was stabbed to death just trying to help someone. They have enough to work around trying to keep our communities safe. Now more than ever, they also have to worry about someone trying to purposely harm them. As a mother I worry about this alot. Please do the right thing and pass this bill Thank you!



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DEBORAH WIERSMA		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 7:23 PM
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I support thos bill. No impeding harassing a first responder.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: J TRENT FORD		PHONE NUMBER: 314-409-6812	
REPRESENTING: AMBULANCE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI		TITLE: PRINCIPAL	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 384			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65205
EMAIL: jtrent4d@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 4:07 PM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH SCHLEMEIER		PHONE NUMBER:	
REPRESENTING: MO COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS / FIRE SERVICE ALLIANCE		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 213 E CAPITOL			
CITY: JC		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65201
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: VERLEE GILKERSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 11:04 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER: 314-440-9000	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCACY		TITLE: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE	
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX #1535			
CITY: O' FALLON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63366
EMAIL: ArnieDienoff@Mail.Com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 11:57 PM	

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I am opposed to this Bill. We already many other State Statues that "First-Responders" can already use. We Do NOT NEED yet ano0ther Law into Our State Statues.



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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: KEITH ROSE		PHONE NUMBER: 618-954-8151
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD - ST. LOUIS CHAPTER		TITLE: TREASURER
ADDRESS: 438 N. SKINKER BLVD.		
CITY: ST. LOUIS	STATE: MO	ZIP: 63130
EMAIL: keith@growjustice.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 3:27 AM

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For more than 75 years the members of the National Lawyers Guild - St. Louis Chapter have been committed to protecting the Constitutional Rights of Americans, including the fundamental rights of free speech, assembly, petition of government for redress, and the right to be free from unreasonable arrest.

Our members are deeply concerned that the proposed offense of 'Impeding a First Responder' would quickly become the go-to tool for government actors hoping to silence their critics or prevent citizens' from publicly recording their actions in the course of the official duties.

While we do recognize the safety concerns faced by some First Responders, the members of the National Lawyers Guild believe that this bill does not do nearly enough to attempt to mitigate the likely abuse of the proposed offense to chill Missourians' Constitutionally-protected speech or retaliate against journalists, government critics, and community watchdogs.



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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: 4/7/2026 11:43 PM	

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

As a concerned citizen and advocate for civil liberties, I strongly oppose HB1868 (Hovis), which criminalizes “interference with a first responder” under dangerously vague and overbroad terms while imposing an unjustifiable financial burden on Missourians. These bills undermine civil liberties under the guise of protecting first responders, and their inclusion of a fiscally irresponsible death benefit expansion compounds their harm.

The bills allow first responders to issue verbal warnings and arrest individuals who approach within 25 feet, even if no harm occurs. This arbitrary distance restriction ignores real-world scenarios: journalists documenting police conduct, bystanders filming arrests, or distressed family members seeking answers during emergencies could all face Class A misdemeanor charges under this arbitrary standard. Such a provision chills First Amendment rights and shields first responders from public scrutiny, eroding trust in institutions. If enacted, Missouri could join states like Arizona and Florida, where similar “buffer zone” laws face legal challenges for violating free speech.

The bill’s reliance on ambiguous terms like “emotional distress” and “legitimate purpose” grants excessive discretion to police. These terms lack legal precision, inviting discriminatory enforcement. For example, during the 2020 protests in St. Louis, officers labeled chants of “Hands up, don’t shoot” as “distressing.” Under this law, such speech could be grounds for arrest. By equating emotional reactions with criminal intent, these bills risk silencing dissent and normalizing punitive responses to lawful criticism.

This bill is a solution in search of a problem. Existing laws already penalize genuine threats or obstruction. These bills, however, transforms routine interactions into criminal acts, prioritizing convenience over constitutional rights, while the bloated death benefit sets a reckless financial precedent. I urge you to reject this dangerous legislation and protect Missourians’ freedoms to observe, question, and hold power accountable.



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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: 4/7/2026 11:42 PM	

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As a concerned citizen and advocate for civil liberties, I strongly oppose HB1868 (Roberts), which criminalizes “interference with a first responder” under dangerously vague and overbroad terms while imposing an unjustifiable financial burden on Missourians. These bills undermine civil liberties under the guise of protecting first responders, and their inclusion of a fiscally irresponsible death benefit expansion compounds their harm.

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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: 4/7/2026 7:15 AM	
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This bill is framed as protecting first responders.

That is a valid objective. However, the mechanism used here introduces significant constitutional concerns that cannot be ignored.

At the outset, I am placing this on record as formal legislative notice: this proposal raises substantial First Amendment, vagueness, overbreadth, and due process concerns, particularly in its reliance on subjective standards and discretionary enforcement.

This bill creates a criminal offense based on proximity—twenty-five feet—triggered by an oral warning, and enforced based on later interpretations of intent. That structure is inherently unstable. It does not rely on clearly defined, objective conduct. Instead, it relies on how conduct is perceived after the fact.

The terms “impede” and “harass” are especially problematic. “Harass” is defined as causing “substantial emotional distress” and serving “no legitimate purpose.” That is not an objective legal standard—it is a subjective determination that varies by individual perception. A person cannot reasonably predict, in real time, whether their conduct will later be interpreted as having “no legitimate purpose.” That is a textbook vagueness issue, where the law fails to give clear notice of what is prohibited.

There is also a direct First Amendment concern. This bill reaches conduct that includes observing, speaking, recording, or questioning first responders in public spaces—activities that are well established as constitutionally protected. By allowing an oral warning to create a twenty-five-foot exclusion zone, the bill effectively authorizes a mobile, discretionary buffer zone that can be imposed without clear standards or physical boundaries. That functions as a prior restraint on speech and observation, particularly in situations involving public accountability.

Additionally, the enforcement mechanism raises due process concerns. The law does not establish a fixed, objective boundary—it allows enforcement to begin at the moment an individual is told to move. That means the scope of criminal liability can shift instantly, depending on the discretion of the first responder. This creates a high risk of inconsistent or selective enforcement, particularly in situations involving public scrutiny or recording of official conduct.

The fiscal note also warrants scrutiny. While it claims no direct fiscal impact, the creation of a new misdemeanor offense necessarily expands enforcement, court processing, and fine-based revenue

structures. Even the fiscal analysis acknowledges anticipated fine revenue and associated court costs. This is not a neutral impact—it is the creation of a new enforcement pathway with distributed system costs, even if those costs are not centrally tracked.

The long-term concern is structural. This bill establishes a precedent where proximity plus subjective interpretation becomes the basis for criminal liability. Once that framework exists, it can be expanded, reinterpreted, or applied in ways that reach beyond its stated purpose.

For the record, I am placing the following on notice: the combination of subjective standards, discretionary proximity restrictions, and speech-adjacent conduct in this proposal creates a high likelihood of constitutional challenge under First Amendment protections, vagueness doctrine, and due process principles.

Protecting first responders is important. But that protection must be narrowly tailored, clearly defined, and constitutionally sound.

This bill does not meet that standard.

For those reasons, I stand in opposition.