



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1908</b>		DATE: <b>1/20/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ABIGAIL WALDEN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/16/2026 11:10 AM</b>	

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

I separated from my now ex-husband in the fall of 2022. We had no assets to divide, so we planned to seek a divorce without lawyers. Our separation and divorce have been amicable, but it took until the spring of 2025 for us to finalize our divorce due to a number of reasons (my anxiety that I might make a misstep in filing paperwork and prolong the process, reluctance in wanting to spend time with my ex to complete the paperwork, my ex's lack of initiative in helping to complete the paperwork, and my own struggles with mental health). Thanks to the law clinic at UMKC, I was finally able to begin the process in the winter of 2025. By this time, my ex and I were both in new relationships. At our divorce trial, I was stunned when asked under oath if I was pregnant. It had been 2.5 years since our separation, and even though I was not pregnant, it was harrowing to be reminded that my choice to seek a divorce could be invalidated if I was pregnant. If I had been pregnant, it would not have been my ex husband's child, and he was not asked under oath if he had impregnated anyone else which could have complicated our divorce proceedings. No, it was my agency to leave my marriage that was at stake in this divorce. My freedom to divorce my ex husband being called into question by whether or not I was pregnant has haunted me to this day.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>AMY HAMMERMAN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN ST. LOUIS</b>		TITLE: <b>STATE POLICY ADVOCATE</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>311 N. LINDBERGH BLVD.</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63141</b>
EMAIL: <b>akuo.hammerman@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 2:46 PM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			
<b>HB 1908 and HB 2337</b>			

To the committee,

Thank you for your the opportunity to present testimony in support o HB 1908 and HB 2337. My name is Amy Kuo Hammerman and I am the Missouri State Policy Advocate for National Council of Jewish Women, based in 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.

NCJWSTL works to advance the well-being and status of women. Currently, family law in Missouri is unclear regarding the ability of courts to enter divorce or legal separation judgments if a woman is pregnant. While there is nothing in the law that explicitly prohibits entry of the judgment, since the law was passed in 1973, judges have consistently interpreted the law to mean that they cannot finalize a divorce until the baby is born. The practical effect of this a prohibition on completing the divorce during pregnancy, regardless of whether it would be in the best interest of the parties or even when both parties are in agreement about ending the marriage.

The practical implications go beyond just delaying entry of the judgment. In cases of abuse, this effective prohibition continues to tie a woman to her abuser longer than is necessary or safe. These ties are not just legal and emotion, but financial. So long as the couple is still married, spouses can remain liable for debts incurred by the other.

We support passage of a bill that serves to clarify that divorce and legal separation processing may be completed regardless of pregnancy status. We suggest two changes to the bill language:

That 452.305 section 3 of the bill read that "Pregnancy status may not prevent the court from entering a judgment of dissolution of marriage or legal separation." This would empower the judge to enter the judgment, however would not mandate it. In some cases, it may be preferable to delay entry of the judgment; for example, to maintain health insurance coverage for the wife and baby. We also suggest eliminating 452.310 section 2 (5) entirely, such that a divorce or legal separation petition need not include a declaration of whether the wife is pregnant. Domestic violence survivors and advocates have experienced and observed for decades that the risk of abuse increases dramatically when a woman is

**pregnant. A survivor should be able to petition for divorce without exposing herself to this increased risk of death or serious injury.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 11:37 PM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DANIELLE DRAKE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/16/2026 11:33 AM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I write in strong support of House Bill 1908, which would allow a dissolution of marriage to proceed even when a wife is pregnant.

I support this bill both personally and professionally. I experienced this statutory restriction firsthand, and while I understand the historical intent behind it—to provide protection related to insurance coverage, financial stability, and to avoid immediate custody litigation—the real-world consequences are far more complex and, too often, harmful.

As a practicing family law attorney, I have seen this restriction repeatedly trap families in legal limbo. When a divorce cannot be finalized due solely to pregnancy, parties are forced to remain legally married despite having already separated their lives. This delay prevents them from resolving critical legal issues such as property division, debt allocation, and custody arrangements for children they already share. Rather than reducing conflict, the delay often prolongs it.

The problem becomes even more acute in situations where the pregnancy involves a child who is not biologically related to the husband, and wife is in a new relationship. Under existing law, there is a legal presumption that a child born during the marriage is a child of that marriage. As a result, parties are frequently required to initiate separate paternity actions, submit to DNA testing, or engage in additional litigation simply to rebut a presumption that does not reflect reality. These processes add cost, delay, and emotional strain at a moment when families are already under significant stress.

From my experience, these delays rarely serve the best interests of children. They do not promote stability, clarity, or closure. Instead, they extend uncertainty, increase litigation, and often exacerbate conflict between parties who are otherwise prepared to move forward responsibly and cooperatively.

This bill recognizes that families are best served when the law allows them to resolve their legal relationships efficiently, transparently, and based on their actual circumstances—not outdated assumptions. Allowing divorces to proceed during pregnancy does not eliminate protections for children or parents; it simply allows courts to address custody, support, and parentage issues directly and appropriately, rather than forcing families into procedural workarounds.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge passage of House Bill 1908. Its impact reaches far beyond administrative convenience—it promotes fairness, reduces unnecessary litigation, and better serves the families and children our laws are meant to protect.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>DOUG MANN</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>716-785-3396</b>
REPRESENTING: <b>PLANNED PARENTHOOD GREAT RIVERS ACTION</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>4251 FOREST PARK AVE</b>		
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>63108</b>
EMAIL: <b>doug.mann@ppgr.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 1:43 PM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ELIZABETH VANDERHEYDEN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 3:18 PM</b>	
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**Pregnant individuals should have full citizen rights to pursue a divorce.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JESSICA HILL</b>	PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-469-7814</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC &amp; SEXUAL VIOLENCE</b>	TITLE: <b>CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>217 OSCAR DRIVE, SUITE A</b>		
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>	STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL: <b>jessica.hill@mocadsv.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/17/2026 11:08 AM</b>
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**Chairman Jones and members of the Children and Families Committee:**

My name is Jessica Hill, and I am the Chief Public Affairs Officer for the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence. On behalf of MOCADSV and its almost one hundred member agencies who provide services to the state's victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, stalking, and teen dating violence, we thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding House Bills 1908 and 2337, sponsored by Representatives Williams and Proudie.

Experiencing domestic violence during pregnancy increases the likelihood of pregnancy complications and poor health outcomes for both mother and baby. Women who are abused during pregnancy are more likely to receive no prenatal care, or delay care until later than recommended, because the abusive partner is controlling access to prenatal care. Maternal exposure to domestic violence is associated with significantly increased risk of low birth weight and preterm birth, and infants exposed to domestic violence can show signs of trauma that include problems eating, sleep disturbances and higher irritability, and delays in development.

Pregnancy can be an especially risky time for a woman experiencing domestic violence, as many women report that abuse started or intensified when they became pregnant. Domestic violence has been identified as one of the leading causes of death in pregnancy-associated mortality reviews conducted by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

We agree with the intent of these bills, that if a court determines there remains no reasonable likelihood that the marriage can be preserved, pregnancy status should not prevent the court from entering a judgement of dissolution. This bill will provide judges the option to finalize a divorce, and help prevent abusive partners from controlling access to safety and care for both moms and babies.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JESSICA PETRIE</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-635-6092</b>
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>NATIONAL ASSN OF SOCIAL WORKERS-MO CHAPTER</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 1805</b>		
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>65102</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>LY SYIN LOBSTER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/15/2026 7:35 PM</b>
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I'm writing you regarding House Bill 1908, legislation that directly impacts the safety of pregnant women experiencing domestic violence. I encourage the Missouri House Children and Families Committee members vote in favor of this bill.

Last year, a friend shared a video of Rep. Williams' testimony about surviving intimate partner violence while pregnant. Her testimony made clear how urgently this legislation is needed for women who must divorce or separate during pregnancy, particularly when abuse is involved.

My own experience closely mirrors Rep. Williams'. During my pregnancy, I made the difficult but necessary decision to separate from my husband to protect myself after experiencing abuse. Like many women in similar situations, my priority was safety, stability, and the well-being of my unborn child.

Pregnant women need the ability to leave unsafe relationships for their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Women are capable of making thoughtful decisions about what is best for themselves and their unborn children.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration. I appreciate your attention to the safety and well-being of Missouri families.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>MAGGIE EDMONDSON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: <b>ABORTION ACTION MISSOURI</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>	STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63110</b>
EMAIL: <b>maggie@abortionactionmissouri.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 3:15 PM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>NADINE BALL</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/18/2026 8:32 PM</b>
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**This change to law is long overdue. This new provision allows mothers to escape abusive marriages, while still protecting the future and existing children. Thank you.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>RIVA CAPELLARI</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/17/2026 3:22 PM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ROBYN SCHELP</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>660-441-3260</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>KIDS WIN MISSOURI</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>3909 SHERMAN CT</b>			
CITY: <b>COLUMBIA</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65203</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ROSE GATTAS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-795-6951</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>AVENUES, INC</b>		TITLE: <b>BOARD PRESIDENT</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>2910 ST. MARY'S AVE.</b>			
CITY: <b>HANNIBAL</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63401</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DAKOTA D JONES</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 9:29 PM</b>	
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HB 1908 strips away decades of settled family law and eliminates an essential layer of protection at arguably one of the most vulnerable times in a person's life. Pregnancy is a significant life event, and courts must be empowered to consider the consequences of their decisions on behalf of families and prospective children. Rather than having a judge try to diligently and carefully consider this fact, this bill makes the rigid rule replace judgment. Missouri should continue to exercise great caution when revising laws impacting families in crisis and give the courts latitude to act in the best interest of all parties concerned when a child is in the anticipated future.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DONNA BRADLEY-JAEGER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 10:36 AM</b>	
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**I oppose any legislation that prohibits a women's right to choose! We shouldn't be wasting time and taxpayer dollars trying to overturn the will of the people just because a few don't like the outcome! Enough!**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>EMILY JOHNSTON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 4:13 PM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MARY P ADMIRE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 9:23 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>PEACH KELLY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 9:13 AM</b>
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**Do not vote to limit our rights as Missourians.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>VICTORIA LYNN HENDERSON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/19/2026 9:59 AM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1908</b>		DATE: <b>1/20/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SUSAN GIBSON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/16/2026 4:22 PM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

**I don't believe the dissolution itself is currently unlawful. I think the harm is that current law requires a pregnant person to disclose pregnancy status when seeking dissolution.**