



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1977		DATE: 1/15/2026
COMMITTEE: Health and Mental Health		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: JAMEY MURPHY		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 4712 COUNTRY CLUB DRIVE		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/15/2026 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: 1/14/2026 2:13 PM	

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Opposition Testimony – HB 1977

I respectfully oppose HB 1977 because it weakens due-process protections at the most coercive point of the mental-health system: involuntary detention.

This bill expands the ability of any adult, including non-professionals and hospital employees, to initiate a detention application without notarization, while still allowing ex parte proceedings and up to 96 hours of involuntary confinement. Removing notarization eliminates a basic verification safeguard at the exact moment when a person’s liberty, medical autonomy, and constitutional rights are at risk. Detention under Chapter 632 is not administrative—it is a deprivation of liberty—and procedural rigor should increase, not decrease, as consequences escalate.

HB 1977 also broadens reliance on declarations “under penalty of perjury” without contemporaneous verification, increasing the risk of misuse, retaliation, misunderstanding, or error. The bill lowers the accountability threshold while preserving sweeping state power: peace-officer custody, forced transport, and involuntary confinement based on allegations that may never be tested before detention occurs. This imbalance creates unacceptable risk, particularly for marginalized individuals, those in family conflict, or people experiencing situational distress rather than true imminent danger.

Missouri can support emergency mental-health intervention without eroding due process. If safeguards like notarization are deemed inconvenient, the correct response is to modernize verification—not eliminate it. HB 1977 moves in the wrong direction by prioritizing speed over accuracy and authority over accountability. For these reasons, I urge the committee to reject HB 1977.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: JACOB SCOTT		PHONE NUMBER:	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 113 MADISON STREET			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/15/2026 12:00 AM	
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