



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2255		DATE: 2/4/2026	
COMMITTEE: Judiciary			
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: BRANDON KOCH		PHONE NUMBER: 573-893-4241	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI INSURANCE COALITION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 220 E. HIGH ST. STE B			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: DANA FRESE		PHONE NUMBER: 573-659-5734	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: HEALTHCARE SERVICES GROUP		TITLE: PRESIDENT & CEO	
ADDRESS: 4700 COUNTRY CLUB DRIVE			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: d.frese@hsg-group.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 5:44 PM	

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I will be offering oral testimony at the hearing on behalf of the Missouri Hospital Association.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: HOLLY THOMPSON REHDER		PHONE NUMBER: 573-243-8456	
REPRESENTING: AXADVOCACY, MIDWEST STERILIZATION CORP		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 1204 LENCO AVE			
CITY: JACKSON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63755
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: JARED HANKINSON		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-3511	
REPRESENTING: MO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 149			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65102
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: JENNIFER J. ARTMAN		PHONE NUMBER: 816-559-0335	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI ORGANIZATION OF DEFENSE LAWYERS		TITLE: ATTORNEY	
ADDRESS: 2555 GRAND BLVD			
CITY: KANSAS CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 64108
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: JORGEN SCHLEMEIER		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: AMERICAN TORT REFORM ASSOC		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 213 E. CAPITOL AVE		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MARK DUNN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MATTHEW SMITH		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-2246	
REPRESENTING: ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF MISSOURI		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 3234 W. TRUMAN BLVD.			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: RAY MCCARTY		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-2246	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF MISSOURI		TITLE: PRESIDENT/CEO	
ADDRESS: 3234 W TRUMAN BLVD			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: rmccarty@aimo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 9:36 AM	

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Associated Industries of Missouri supports this bill that aligns Missouri's requirement for expert witnesses in state courts with requirements under federal law for federal courts.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: RICH AUBUCHON		PHONE NUMBER: 573-616-1845	
REPRESENTING: MO CIVIL JUSTICE REFORM COALITION, INC.		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 112 EAST HIGH STREET			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: TYLER TRAVERS		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION - MISSOURI		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: COLUMBIA	STATE: MO	ZIP: 65203
EMAIL: tyler.vertexgov@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 1:53 PM
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We appreciate the consideration of the committee on this legislation and the sponsor for bringing this forward. This bill updates the current statutory rule of evidence relating to testimony by experts to conform with recent changes made to Federal Rule of Evidence (FRE) 702 intended to clarify the court's gatekeeping role with respect to expert testimony.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF		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: 2/4/2026 11:07 PM	

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I urge you to strongly oppose HB2255 (Hovis) as regressive measures that will further weaponize our courts against grassroots movements and marginalized communities and tilt an already uneven playing field further in favor of powerful corporate and institutional defendants.

These bills create a costly, pre-trial gauntlet where a judge, not a jury, becomes the ultimate gatekeeper of scientific and technical truth. The vague command that an expert's opinion must "reflect a reliable application" of methods grants judges extraordinary, subjective discretion. This is a direct threat to community-based and activist experts.

A judge with inherent biases could easily exploit this language to dismiss a qualified environmental scientist testifying about pollution's health impacts because they are also a community activist, deeming their passion as "bias" that taints their conclusion's "reflection." An experienced homeless advocate could be barred from explaining systemic failures because a judge decides their advocacy shapes their analysis. These bills empower courts to disqualify experts not for flawed science, but for their politics and lived experience—precisely the perspectives needed to challenge powerful interests.

The immense cost of this new pre-trial process alone will silence community groups and individuals, while corporations easily afford endless challenges. This isn't neutral procedure; it's a systemic filter to exclude the voices of the oppressed and protect the status quo from accountability. It tilts the scales of justice toward the powerful and insulates them from the very experts who understand the harm they cause.

I urge you to defend democratic access to the courts and vote NO on HB2255.



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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: 2/4/2026 11:06 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: 2/3/2026 10:41 AM	

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HB 2255 is being sold as a neutral evidentiary clarification.

It is not.

It is a deliberate lowering of evidentiary standards in the exact courts where the State exercises its most coercive power over families, children, and fundamental rights.

That choice is not accidental.

1. HB 2255 Creates a Two-Tier Justice System

The bill explicitly exempts family, juvenile, probate, and non-jury proceedings from modern reliability standards applied everywhere else.

That means:

Stricter expert scrutiny in commercial disputes and jury trials

Looser, less reliable expert testimony in cases involving:
termination of parental rights
child custody
guardianship
juvenile adjudication
civil commitment

This is backwards. Constitutionally backwards.

If expert testimony must meet a reliability threshold, it must meet it most strictly where liberty and family integrity are at stake — not least.

2. This Bill Lowers Due Process Where Due Process Is Most Required

Missouri courts and the U.S. Supreme Court are clear:
family integrity and parental rights are fundamental liberty interests.

**HB 2255 responds by:
removing reliability gatekeeping,
permitting opinions based on soft, unverifiable data, and
insulating those opinions from meaningful judicial scrutiny.**

That is not a neutral procedural choice.

It is a due process degradation.

The State cannot justify weakening evidentiary standards in proceedings where the consequences include:

**permanent severance of parental rights,
removal of children,
state custody, or
loss of personal liberty.**

3. The Bill Invites Advocacy-Driven “Experts” to Control Outcomes

By retaining the vague “reasonably relied upon” standard without requiring demonstrable methodological reliability, HB 2255:

**rewards credentialed advocacy,
shields speculative opinions,
and transfers power from judges to aligned experts.**

In family and juvenile courts—where expert testimony often decides the case—this invites unchecked narrative authority under the appearance of expertise.

That is not evidence.

That is policy smuggled through testimony.

4. Judicial Gatekeeping Is Arbitrarily Stripped

Subsection 2 properly requires:

**sufficient facts,
reliable methods,
reliable application.**

Subsection 1 does not.

The General Assembly is not merely setting procedure here—it is directing courts to accept weaker evidence in specific forums.

That fragmentation:

**undermines uniform rules of evidence,
encourages forum shopping, and
creates appellate instability.**

Uniform evidentiary standards exist to prevent exactly this.

5. Separation of Powers Is Being Tested

Rules of evidence are traditionally governed by the judiciary.

HB 2255:

**hard-codes evidentiary weight by statute,
dictates when reliability review is optional,
and selectively weakens judicial discretion.**

This is legislative overreach into judicial function, and it will not age well under constitutional review.

Cross-Bill Pattern Note:

HB 2255 does not exist in isolation.

**This session shows a repeating legislative pattern:
expanding administrative and judicial discretion in family, juvenile, and school-related proceedings,**

while simultaneously reducing procedural protections, evidentiary rigor, or accountability mechanisms.

**When read alongside:
juvenile justice and school discipline bills,
antibullying statutes expanding reporting and liability frameworks, and
family-court procedural amendments,**

HB 2255 functions as a supporting structural bill — one that ensures expert testimony faces less scrutiny in precisely those expanded-authority arenas.

That is not coincidence.

That is architecture.

Courts look at patterns.

So should this body.

**HB 2255:
lowers evidentiary standards where constitutional rights are most vulnerable,
institutionalizes unequal justice by forum,
and fits a broader pattern of procedural weakening in family and juvenile systems.**

If expert testimony must be governed by statute, it must be governed uniformly, rigorously, and with heightened protections where fundamental rights are implicated.

This bill does the opposite.

It should not advance.

Constitutional & Structural Footnotes:

**Troxel v. Granville, 530 U.S. 57 (2000) — parental rights as fundamental liberty interests.
In re K.A.W., 133 S.W.3d 1 (Mo. banc 2004) — heightened due process in termination proceedings.
Mathews v. Eldridge, 424 U.S. 319 (1976) — procedural safeguards must scale with the interests at stake.**

Mo. Const. art. I, §§ 2, 10 — due process and equal protection.

Mo. Const. art. II, § 1 — separation of powers.



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INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: WES SHUMATE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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