



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2297</b>		DATE: <b>1/20/2026</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Agriculture</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>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>ALAYNA FORCK</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-893-4181</b>
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>3118 EMERALD LANE</b>		
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 12:00 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE C. AC "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVO</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:                  ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 11:56 PM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>BEN TRAVLOS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-635-3819</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MO SOYBEAN ASSOC.</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>734 S. COUNTRY CLUB DRIVE</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65109</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>MARK FIEGENBAUM</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-690-8580</b>
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI FARM BUREAU</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: <b>MO</b>
EMAIL:		ZIP:
ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SHANNON COOPER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>660-890-1432</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI CATTLEMEN's ASC</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>208 MADISON</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</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>SARAH BERRY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/17/2026 2:13 PM</b>	
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I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to HB 2297.

At its core, HB 2297 creates a statutory authorization for one private landowner—or their contractor—to physically enter an adjoining private property without consent, notice, or judicial oversight, and to do so under an express declaration that such entry “is not guilty of trespass.”

This represents a significant and troubling shift in Missouri property law.

**1. HB 2297 converts trespass into a legislatively sanctioned privilege**

Under existing law, access to another person’s land generally requires consent, an easement, or a court-ordered remedy when disputes arise. HB 2297 replaces those guardrails with a blanket authorization allowing entry up to ten feet along the entire length of a property boundary, regardless of circumstances.

Ten feet is not de minimis. In many rural and semi-rural settings, this distance can include:

- yards,
- gardens,
- driveways,
- livestock areas,
- equipment storage,
- or areas closely tied to the use and enjoyment of the home.

The bill provides no requirement for notice, no limitation on time, duration, frequency, or method of entry, and no requirement that entry be the least intrusive means necessary to complete the work.

**2. The vegetation immunity is especially dangerous**

While HB 2297 states that the owner or contractor is liable for damages caused by entry, it then explicitly removes liability for the clearing or removal of any tree, brush, or vegetation that lies directly upon the property boundary line.

This carve-out is not minor. Boundary-line vegetation often serves critical functions:

erosion and water control,  
windbreaks,  
shade,  
privacy buffers,  
wildlife habitat,  
and long-established markers relied upon in boundary understanding.

Under HB 2297, irreversible damage may occur with no compensation and no consent, even where ownership of boundary vegetation is disputed or historically shared.

### **3. The bill lacks procedural protections and invites conflict**

HB 2297 contains no mechanism for:

dispute resolution,  
advance communication,  
mediation,  
safety coordination,  
or neutral review before entry occurs.

By removing trespass liability up front, the bill encourages unilateral action and shifts the burden to the adjoining landowner to pursue remedies after damage or confrontation has already occurred.

This approach does not reduce conflict—it escalates it.

### **4. Property rights and personal security are civil liberties**

Private property is not merely an economic interest; it is tied to personal safety, privacy, and peaceful enjoyment. Missouri law has long respected that boundary.

HB 2297 erodes that principle by declaring that a person may lawfully cross onto another's land simply because their project requires convenience, rather than necessity demonstrated through consent or court process.

### **5. Existing law already provides remedies without authorizing forced entry Fence disputes can already be resolved through:**

negotiated agreements,  
temporary access permissions,  
civil court orders,  
or narrowly tailored easements.

HB 2297 is not filling a legal gap—it is short-circuiting due process in favor of expediency.

HB 2297 legalizes conduct that would otherwise constitute trespass, removes liability for permanent boundary damage, and does so without basic procedural safeguards.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to vote NO on HB 2297.

In defense of the public interest,  
Rev. Sarah M. Berry