



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2337</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>
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The testimony submitted for HB 1908 applies here as well.



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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>	
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<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>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>CAMMIE STORM</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>417-280-6473</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>JUST ANOTHER HUMAN</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>2707 COUNTY ROAD 4000</b>			
CITY: <b>WEST PLAINS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65775</b>
EMAIL: <b>camlnichols75@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/17/2026 11:56 AM</b>	
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**My name is Cammie Storm.**

**I submit this testimony in support of HB 2337.**

**I respectfully urge the committee to support this bill.**

**Thank you,  
Cammie Storm  
Just Another Human  
West Plains, Missouri**



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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>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/16/2026 11:33 AM</b>	
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I write in strong support of House Bill 2337, 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 2337. 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>LESLIE ORTBALS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:                  ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 7:02 PM</b>
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**I am writing in support of HB 2337. This is common sense. Let's not go back to the 1940s please!  
Thank you Rep. Proudie.**



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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 am writing in support of HB 2337. Like the bill’s sponsor, I am a Black woman from Missouri who has experienced domestic violence. Unfortunately, I experienced Domestic violence while I was pregnant. One incident of physical abuse during my 3rd trimester made me decide to leave. At that time, I had too much going on to even consider divorce as a full-time college student, becoming a single parent due to the separation from my abusive husband. At the time, I had no idea that abuse was an issue that around 20% of pregnant women dealt with.

As I think about the stories of women I know who have experienced domestic violence, I wonder if they would have been able to get a divorce. They could have started their journey to healing, safety, and emotional and mental healing sooner. My mentor, who helped me heal from domestic violence, also shared her story from back in the 1960s. She was pregnant and abused. She was beaten severely and taken to the emergency room where they thought she would have a miscarriage. She did feel she had the resources to leave, nor could she get a divorce.

Most people don’t get married expecting to get divorced. It’s a hard decision to end a marriage. Marriage should not be entered into or exited lightly. It’s a life-changing decision. Women understand the seriousness and should be allowed to get a divorce if that is in their best interest and the best interest of their unborn child.

Please vote in support of this legislation and allow pregnant women to make the best choice for themselves.



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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>SARA BRAMMER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>816-505-4905</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>SYNERGY SERVICES, INC.</b>		TITLE: <b>VICE PRESIDENT OF FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>400 E 6TH ST</b>			
CITY: <b>PARKVILLE</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>64152</b>
EMAIL: <b>sbrammer@synergyservices.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/20/2026 2:45 PM</b>	
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**In Support of Allowing Divorce During Pregnancy for Survivors of Domestic Violence**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the importance of allowing divorce during pregnancy—particularly for survivors of domestic violence. This issue is not abstract or theoretical. For many survivors, the inability to legally end a marriage while pregnant places them at continued risk of harm, coercion, and even death.

Domestic violence does not pause during pregnancy. In fact, pregnancy is one of the most dangerous periods in an abusive relationship. National research consistently shows that abuse often begins or escalates during pregnancy, driven by increased control, jealousy, financial dependence, and fear of abandonment by the abusive partner. Homicide is a leading cause of death for pregnant and postpartum women in the United States, with intimate partners frequently identified as the perpetrators.

When states prohibit or delay divorce during pregnancy, they unintentionally trap survivors in legally enforced proximity to their abusers. These laws force continued legal ties at precisely the moment when a survivor may be attempting to escape violence, establish safety, and prepare for childbirth.

**Continued Legal Control and Coercion**

Marriage confers legal authority. When divorce is unavailable, abusive partners retain access to financial accounts, insurance decisions, medical decision-making leverage, and legal standing that can be used to harass or threaten survivors. Pregnancy already increases vulnerability; forcing survivors to remain married compounds that vulnerability by preserving a formal power imbalance.

**Barriers to Safety and Stability**

Survivors seeking safety often need to relocate, secure housing, and establish independent finances. The inability to finalize a divorce can delay protective orders, complicate housing eligibility, interfere with employment decisions, and undermine long-term safety planning. For some survivors, the requirement to remain married becomes another tool of intimidation: “You can’t leave—I still own you legally.”

**Forced Contact Increases Risk**

**Divorce delays often require continued communication, shared decision-making, or court appearances that increase contact between survivor and abuser. For survivors of domestic violence, forced contact is not neutral—it is dangerous. Every additional mandated interaction increases the risk of stalking, assault, or lethal violence.**

#### **Impact on Children—Born and Unborn**

**Preventing divorce during pregnancy does not protect children. On the contrary, it exposes unborn children to heightened stress, trauma, and potential violence. Survivors who are forced to remain legally tied to abusive partners may be coerced into unsafe parenting agreements later, or pressured during pregnancy in ways that affect medical care and outcomes.**

**Allowing divorce during pregnancy enables survivors to establish safer legal frameworks before a child is born—reducing post-birth conflict, clarifying parental responsibilities, and prioritizing the well-being of both parent and child.**

#### **Survivor Autonomy and Dignity**

**At its core, this issue is about autonomy. Survivors are capable of making informed decisions about their own safety and lives. Laws that prohibit divorce during pregnancy substitute state judgment for survivor judgment, often with devastating consequences. No one should be legally required to remain married to someone who harms them—especially during one of the most physically and emotionally vulnerable periods of their life.**

#### **Conclusion**

**Allowing divorce during pregnancy is not about encouraging family dissolution. It is about preventing state-mandated harm. It is about recognizing the realities of domestic violence, respecting survivor autonomy, and prioritizing safety over outdated legal assumptions.**

**I urge this body to support policies that allow survivors of domestic violence to pursue divorce during pregnancy without delay. Doing so saves lives, protects children, and affirms that safety and dignity matter—always.**

**Thank you for your consideration.**

**Sara Brammer, Ph.D.  
Licensed Psychologist  
Vice President of Family Violence Services**



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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 2337 sweeps away an important lag in the law that is intended to facilitate stability during pregnancy, a period in which the outcome will affect not only two people but a new life about to enter this world. Under current law, it is possible for courts to restrain the process in order to consider, in a careful and considered way, the well-being of all parties. With this bill, all this is swept away, as it explicitly excludes pregnancy as a consideration, opting for speed rather than deliberation. Missouri should be very careful about uprooting long-standing policies related to protecting families.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2337</b>		DATE: <b>1/20/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<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>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

**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!**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2337</b>		DATE: <b>1/20/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<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>
<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 2337</b>		DATE: <b>1/20/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<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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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2337</b>		DATE: <b>1/20/2026</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>		
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
<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>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

**Do not vote to limit our rights as Missourians.**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2337</b>		DATE: <b>1/20/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<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 12:15 PM</b>	

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I appreciate the intent behind HB 2337 and the recognition that pregnancy should not prevent a court from entering a judgment of dissolution of marriage or legal separation. Clarifying this point serves an important purpose, particularly for individuals who may otherwise be left in prolonged legal limbo during a vulnerable period of their lives.

At the same time, the bill raises concerns that warrant careful consideration. While pregnancy is expressly declared not to be a barrier to judgment, the statute continues to require disclosure of pregnancy status in the petition.

When a fact has no legal effect on the court’s authority, the state should exercise restraint before compelling disclosure of sensitive, protected medical information. Privacy and dignity are not incidental interests; they are foundational to public trust in the legal system.

The bill also continues to rely on gendered language—specifically, “whether the wife is pregnant”—that does not fully reflect the diversity of families and individuals already recognized by Missouri courts. Family law functions best when drafted with neutrality and precision, ensuring equal application and avoiding unnecessary confusion or exclusion.

Finally, the bill preserves the complete elimination of defenses to divorce and legal separation without retaining narrow judicial discretion for extraordinary circumstances involving coercion or abuse of process. While efficiency in court proceedings is valuable, it should not come at the expense of discernment in situations where power imbalances or injustice may be present.

HB 2337 addresses a legitimate concern. The question before this body is whether it does so with sufficient attention to privacy, modern applicability, and judicial restraint. Good law resolves problems while avoiding unnecessary intrusion, and this bill would benefit from further refinement to meet that standard.

For your careful consideration,  
 Rev. Sarah M. Berry



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2337</b>		DATE: <b>1/20/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<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>
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2337</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>

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**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.**