



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2808		DATE: 4/14/2026	
COMMITTEE: Crime and Public Safety			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER: 314-440-9000	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCACY		TITLE: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE	
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX #1535			
CITY: O' FALLON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63366
EMAIL: ArnieDienoff@Mail.Com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 4/14/2026 11:57 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am in Support of this Bill.

I would like to see an Amendment in the Penalty of this crime to be a Class-E Felony as the First-Offence,

A Class-D Felony for the Second Offence,

A Class-C Felony Offence for the Third Offence.



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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: 4/14/2026 7:18 AM	
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This bill is framed as accountability. In practice, it is overbroad, duplicative, and structurally dangerous.

Missouri law already addresses this conduct.

If a parent aids or encourages a crime, they can be charged under existing accomplice liability statutes. If a parent fails to supervise or protect a child, there are neglect and endangerment provisions already in place.

This bill does not fill a gap—it expands liability into vague territory that is difficult to define and easy to misuse.

The language is the problem.

“Knowingly permits” is not a clean legal standard in a real household.

Parents do not have constant visibility or control over a child’s actions, especially as children get older. This language opens the door to criminalizing parenting decisions, judgment calls, and even lack of awareness—because “should have known” quickly becomes “knowingly permitted” in practice.

And once that door is open, enforcement becomes inconsistent.

This bill does not distinguish between active participation and passive circumstances. It collapses encouraging, aiding, and permitting into one offense. Those are not the same level of conduct. One is intentional involvement. The other can be interpreted as failure to prevent.

That is a critical legal line—and this bill erases it.

There is also a proportionality issue.

A parent can be charged with a Class A misdemeanor tied to a felony committed by the minor—without the parent committing a felony themselves. That creates a secondary punishment structure based on someone else’s actions, not the parent’s direct conduct.

And the “separate offense” clause compounds that risk. One incident involving multiple actions by a minor could expose a parent to multiple charges. That is stacking liability without clear limiting

principles.

Then there is the real-world impact.

This bill will not target the most extreme cases—those are already prosecutable. It will expand exposure for families already under stress, already navigating difficult environments, and already interacting with the system. It increases prosecutorial discretion in a way that is broad, subjective, and unevenly applied.

This is not precision policy. This is expansion.

Legislative Notice:

Let the record reflect the following:

This legislation creates a new criminal offense that overlaps with existing accomplice liability and child neglect statutes, raising concerns regarding redundancy and unnecessary expansion of criminal liability.

The inclusion of the term “knowingly permits” introduces a vague and subjective standard that may result in inconsistent enforcement and the potential criminalization of parental judgment or lack of control.

The consolidation of distinct levels of conduct—encouraging, aiding, and permitting—into a single offense removes critical legal distinctions and undermines proportional accountability.

The penalty structure imposes criminal liability on a parent based on the actions of a minor, creating a derivative punishment framework that may not align with the parent’s direct conduct.

The provision allowing each violation to constitute a separate offense introduces the potential for compounded liability without clear limiting standards.

For these reasons, I stand in opposition.