



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
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: BECKY LOHMANN		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI CENTURY FOUNDATION		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: COLUMBIA	STATE: MO	ZIP: 65203
EMAIL: becky@csga.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 9:38 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Missouri is in the midst of a literacy crisis. In 2003, Missouri ranked 14th out of 50 states in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth grade reading scores. By 2024, however, Missouri dropped to 38th with only 27% of fourth graders reading at the proficient level or higher. Missouri Assessment Program data similarly shows declines in reading proficiency in grades three through eight since the 2017-2018 school year. Our current state reading scores are still below pre-pandemic levels. Fortunately, efforts in other states, such as Mississippi, Louisiana, and Tennessee show that comprehensive literacy reform can achieve significant results. Mississippi's Literacy-Based Promotion Act, which focuses on early intervention, training teachers in the science of reading, and individual reading plans, played a huge part in improving Mississippi's fourth grade reading proficiency rates from 49th in the nation in 2013 to 9th in 2024. Louisiana ranked first in the nation for fourth grade reading growth in both 2022 and 2024, and was one of only two states to improve fourth grade scores beyond pre-pandemic levels. Similarly, Tennessee's push for literacy reform began around 2016 and the state passed the Literacy Success Act in 2021. Test scores from 2024 show Tennessee in the top ten states for improvement since 2022 in all four NAEP assessments, with fourth grade reading improving from 38th place in 2009 to 24th in 2024. House Bill 2872 will build on our current policies to ensure all students receive the resources they need to read proficiently. Early intervention using a universal screener, a focus on teaching phonics, and a meaningful retention policy are all keys to success in other states. We urge the committee to support HB 2872 and give Missouri students the same chance to succeed.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CORY KOEDEL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
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: DANIEL WATSON		PHONE NUMBER: 314-333-1549	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: COALITION WITH ST. LOUIS KIDS		TITLE: YOUTH ORGANIZER	
ADDRESS: 7700 WOODSTOCK ROAD			
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63135
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
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: JIM MALLE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: ALIGNED		TITLE: DIRECTOR OF POLICY
ADDRESS: 6208 LARAN AVENUE		
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
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: JORDAN ZAKERY		PHONE NUMBER: 214-358-2741	
REPRESENTING: EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION IN ACTION		TITLE: LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: 1350 N. MERIDIAN			
CITY: INDIANAPOLIS		STATE: IN	ZIP: 46202
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KIMBERLY KUHNS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 10:23 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

HB 2872 puts students first by addressing literacy at the elementary level, where it matters most. Reading is the foundation every student needs to succeed academically and in life. Missouri has a responsibility to ensure children are given the tools to learn, grow, and thrive.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVO		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 11:31 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am Opposed to this Bill. Let's leave Educational Training and Instruction to Our very qualified and Dedicated Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: DAVA-LEIGH BRUSH		PHONE NUMBER: 314-600-6018
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI EQUITY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP		TITLE:
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1352		
CITY: ST. CHARLES		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63302
EMAIL: dlb@missouriequity.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:39 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Missouri Equity Education Partnership supports literacy. We oppose this bill because we believe making a particular method illegal treats literacy as one-size fits all. We believe that educators need a variety of tools, and meeting students where they are and giving them what they need, even if it differs from general practices, is the very definition of equity. The three-cueing system in isolation, like any model in isolation, is problematic; it does have value in teaching visual inferencing which helps beginning readers connect the written word to the context of what they are reading. This is true whether they are young students new to reading, or ESL students new to reading English. We encourage educator preparation programs to provide a variety of tools to be able to address the diversity of Missouri's students.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DAVA-LEIGH BRUSH		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 2:27 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Reading is complex and no one system. All models are problematic. Phonics only programs create kids who are good "word callers." I was one of those kids. 3-cueing only models create students who cannot even look up a word i a dictionary because they have no phonemic awareness. Even phonemic awareness models use "look-say" sight words: "the," "of," etc are such words. Reading is complicated and needs all the tools possible. "Guessing what is happening based on pictures" is an absolutely valid method to build reading skills. It is called visual inferencing. As they examine the picutre they can often connect to the word they didn't know and then be taught the phonics of it. Having taught ESL students who come to us at all levels of English and literacy in home language, I learned a lot teaching the students who came without sound-symbol awareness and phonetic differences. It took MANY methods. I was able to teach my own basic reading before kindergarten with a variety of methods. Removing tools from teachers' toolsheds (boxes aren't big enough) by literally outlawing creates a one -size program and we all know one-size doesn't fit everyone.

Furthermore, retaining 3rd graders has been used in Ohio and they've paused it. It puts so much pressure on kids. They test at start of 3rd grade. If they pass, great. If not, they intervene with reading specialists (which every district does not have). They test those who fell short mid-year and some passed-GREAT. Others had more intensive interventions. At the end of the year, those still falling short had to take summer school which creates logistical and financial issues for families. Everyone wants kids to do well, but ignoring outside factors contributing is difficult. One of the best indicators of reading success is literacy in the home as well.

One of the witnesses said, "If you can't teach kids in poverty, you shouldn't teach," was insulting personally. We can but need resources. Maslow before Bloom is a real issue. Literacy is complicated and this bill oversimplifies it.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL HARRIS		PHONE NUMBER: 615-202-3579	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION		TITLE: GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MANAGER	
ADDRESS: 407 S. 6TH STREET			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65205
EMAIL: mharris@msta.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 9:55 AM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

MSTA supports early identification of students who need reading support. Educators agree that screening tools can be valuable. However, this bill goes too far by mandating a single, state-selected screener for all districts and all students. MSTa adopted resolutions consistently oppose one-size-fits-all instructional mandates that remove professional judgment and local decision-making. Missouri students are diverse, and districts serve communities with different needs, resources, and student populations. A single screener cannot capture that complexity. Teachers already use multiple, research-based screening tools aligned to their curriculum and student needs. Mandating one screener risks replacing tools that are already working, disrupting existing systems, and reducing flexibility for educators who know their students best. This mandate also raises serious implementation concerns. A single statewide screener creates challenges around training, time, technology capacity, and data use, especially in rural and under-resourced districts. Once again, the bill sets new requirements without guaranteeing long-term funding or support. Most importantly, screening is only effective when it informs instruction. A mandated screener does not improve literacy unless educators are empowered to use the data in ways that make sense for their students. MSTa believes the state should support districts in choosing from multiple approved screeners, not force a single tool on every classroom in Missouri.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/26/2026 1:26 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

HB 2872 should be opposed—not because literacy doesn’t matter, but because this bill demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of education, child development, and the constitutional limits of legislative power.

What is most iconic about this bill is how openly unprepared the Missouri Legislature appears to be to write education policy in 2026.

The bill reads less like evidence-based reform and more like an attempt to legislate pedagogy through blunt force, political talking points, and rigid mandates that ignore classroom realities.

This legislation overreaches by micromanaging instructional methodology, dictating prohibited practices without acknowledging the professional discretion of educators, the diversity of learners, or the evolving nature of evidence-based instruction.

Education is not improved by banning terminology or forcing compliance through threat of retention; it is improved by investing in teachers, respecting professional expertise, and addressing systemic barriers like poverty, absenteeism, understaffing, and underfunding.

HB 2872 also raises serious constitutional concerns. By imposing mandatory retention tied to a single assessment framework, the bill risks violating principles of due process and equal protection by treating children as interchangeable data points rather than individuals with differing needs, disabilities, language backgrounds, and circumstances.

When state power is used to penalize students for systemic failures beyond their control, that is not reform—it is coercion.

Further, this bill places enormous administrative burdens on schools while offering no meaningful guarantees of funding, staffing, or capacity. Mandates without resources are not accountability—they are abdication.

The Legislature cannot continue to offload its responsibilities onto teachers and districts while pretending that statutory force will substitute for thoughtful policy.

If Missouri lawmakers want to improve literacy outcomes, they should start by demonstrating literacy themselves—literacy in education research, literacy in constitutional governance, and literacy in the

limits of legislative authority.

Until then, the Legislature should refrain from writing education bills that read as punitive, performative, and disconnected from the classrooms they claim to serve.

Missouri's children deserve serious policy, not ideological overconfidence wrapped in statute.

**Vote NO on HB 2872.
— Rev. Sarah M. Berry**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: HEATHER KNIGHT		PHONE NUMBER: 573-751-4445
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION		TITLE: COORDINATOR OF LITERACY
ADDRESS:		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65102
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2872		DATE: 1/28/2026
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: MIKE LODEWEGEN		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI COUNCIL OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 3550 AMAZONAS DRIVE		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/28/2026 12:00 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		