



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2997		DATE: 2/10/2026
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		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ABIGAIL HERNDON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/10/2026 7:08 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/10/2026 11:37 PM	
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I am in Support of this Bill. The creation of the "Persistent Domestic Violence Offenders" Website by the Missouri Department of Public Safety and The Missouri Highway Patrol for Public viewing and consumption is needed for enhanced Public safety.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: COURTNEY LEADER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/10/2026 1:42 PM	

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To the Honorable Members of the Missouri Crime and Safety Committee:

My name is Courtney Leader, and I am writing in strong support of HB 2997 (BreAnna's Law), HB 3012 (Adriaunna's Law), and HB 3058, which would establish a public registry of persistent domestic violence offenders in Missouri. I am not here as a policy expert or advocate. I am here as a mother whose daughter's life was forever altered because critical information about a repeat offender was not accessible to me when I needed it most.

My daughter, Cyrina Leader, was 4.5 months old when she was nearly killed by her 'father'—the man who was in the delivery room when she was born, who helped with diapering and supported me through postpartum recovery. While we were on a waiting list for daycare, I entrusted him with her care. I had no reason to believe she was in danger. I had no way of knowing what he had done before. On that day, he inflicted injuries so severe that nine years later, Cyrina still lives with the consequences every single day. She suffered a fractured skull, bilateral brain bleeds, blood in her eyes, broken ribs, and extensive bruising. She was diagnosed with acquired cerebral palsy. She has endured over 20 surgeries and procedures. She takes daily medications to control seizures and muscle spasticity. She attends weekly therapies and travels 3.5 hours each way to see specialists. She requires private duty nursing services through Medicaid and recently became eligible for self-directed support services after years on a waitlist. Cyrina will need care for the rest of her life because of what was done to her as an infant.

Her abuser was convicted and sentenced to 12 years in prison. He served 9 years and has since been released.

Here is what I learned only after he accepted a plea deal: He had committed a similar crime against another child in Oklahoma—a child he was also the "father" of.

An acquaintance told me about the Oklahoma case after it was too late to protect Cyrina. That information existed. It was in a court record somewhere. But it was not accessible to me—not as a mother making decisions about who to trust with my infant daughter, not as someone trying to protect my child.

If a public registry like the one proposed in these bills had existed, I could have searched his name. I would have seen his prior conviction for violence against a child in his care. I would have made a different choice. Cyrina's life would look entirely different today.

These bills are not theoretical to me. They represent exactly the kind of transparency that could have prevented my daughter's suffering.

The registry proposed in HB 2997, HB 3012, and HB 3058 would make publicly available the names, photographs, conviction dates, and offense information of individuals with multiple convictions for domestic violence against family or household members. It would be maintained by the Missouri State Highway Patrol and accessible online to anyone—employers, neighbors, parents, and future partners.

This is the information that should have been available to me. This is the protection that every parent, every vulnerable person, deserves.

I understand the concerns some may raise about registries—about rehabilitation, about second chances, about privacy. But these bills include reasonable safeguards. They apply only to repeat offenders—those with at least one prior conviction. Names are removed from the registry after periods ranging from five to twenty years, depending on the number of prior offenses. First-time failures to register result in fines and an opportunity to comply, not immediate criminal penalties.

These are measured, reasonable protections designed to give the public access to information about individuals who have demonstrated a pattern of violence against the most vulnerable members of their households.

The alternative—the current system—means that dangerous patterns remain hidden. It means that abusers can move across state lines, start new relationships, gain access to new victims, and repeat their violence without anyone knowing their history. It means more children like Cyrina suffer preventable injuries. It means more families endure preventable tragedies.

Cyrina is nine years old now. My current husband has adopted her. She is strong, resilient, and loved. But she will never have the childhood she should have had. She will never have the independence she deserves. And I will never stop asking myself: What if I had known? What if that information had been public? What if there had been a registry?

These three bills—BreAnna's Law, Adriaunna's Law, and HB 3058—give you the opportunity to answer those questions for other families. To ensure that the next mother, the next employer, the next person considering whether to trust someone with a child or a vulnerable loved one, has access to the information they need to make an informed decision.

This registry will not undo what happened to Cyrina. But it can prevent the next tragedy. It can save the next child.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 2997, HB 3012, and HB 3058, and to give Missouri families the transparency and protection they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Leader

Mother of Cyrina Leader



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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: DR. CYNTHIA R. BENNETT		PHONE NUMBER: 314-269-0100
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: JADASA		TITLE: FOUNDER/CEO
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 2636		
CITY: FLORISSANT		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63032
EMAIL: crbennett@jadasa.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/10/2026 11:05 AM

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Our organization, JADASA is in support of this bill. We currently have a client whose abuse was so egregious, the St. Louis County Courts granted her and her children Full Order of Protection from 2023 - 2033 (10 years) against her abuser who has had a long history of criminal and abusive behaviors. This bill will give potential victims a headsup of who they are getting involved with.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JANETTE PERRY		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/7/2026 7:58 AM
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I am BreAnna's mom, while this law can't bring my daughter back, I pray that it saves lives of others that are living in domestic violence situations. I see signs from BreAnna daily and I know that she would want this law passed to save lives.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JESSICA SHEPHERD		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/8/2026 9:18 AM
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I fully support a registry to allow the public to be aware of persistent domestic abusers in their community.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: NADINE BALL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/6/2026 6:32 PM
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As I read this bill, I wonder why you would wait until 2027, although I suppose setting up the registry requires that much time. Please pass this bill and help protect abused spouses across the state.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: PRECIOUS JONES		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/9/2026 11:38 AM	
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I am in full support of this bill. Dv aggersors should be made public to save future victims from becoming another case number or worse a long live hashtag.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: RALPHEL JOHNSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/7/2026 9:09 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ROSE GHATTAS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-795-6951	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: AVENUES, INC.		TITLE: PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS	
ADDRESS: 1213 BIRD ST.			
CITY: HANNIBAL		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63401
EMAIL: rose.aghattas@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/10/2026 11:11 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rose Ghattas, and I submit testimony today on behalf of the Board of Directors of Avenues, a Missouri-based organization that serves victims of domestic violence through emergency shelter, advocacy, and long-term support services.

We respectfully urge the Committee's support for legislation creating a registry of persistent domestic violence offenders.

In Missouri, domestic violence remains one of the leading drivers of serious injury, family instability, and repeat involvement with law enforcement and the courts. Our experience at Avenues aligns with the data: domestic violence is rarely a single, isolated incident. It is most often a pattern of behavior that escalates over time. A relatively small number of repeat offenders are responsible for a disproportionate share of violent incidents, violations of orders of protection, and continued victimization.

A registry of persistent domestic violence offenders would serve several important purposes under Missouri's existing legal framework:

First, it would enhance victim safety and informed decision-making. Survivors navigating custody arrangements, protective orders, housing, and employment deserve access to accurate, court-established information that may affect their safety and the safety of their children.

Second, it would assist law enforcement, prosecutors, and the judiciary by providing a consolidated record of repeat offending, supporting more informed decisions related to bail, sentencing, probation conditions, and enforcement of orders of protection.

Third, it would reinforce accountability. Missouri has taken meaningful steps to treat domestic violence as the serious criminal conduct it is. This registry complements existing statutes by recognizing patterns of behavior and signaling that repeated abuse carries escalating consequences.

We recognize the importance of constitutional protections, privacy considerations, and statutory precision. Any registry should be clearly defined in statute, based solely on convictions, include notice

provisions, and provide a mechanism for review consistent with Missouri law. Protecting victims and preserving due process are not competing goals—they are both essential to a just system.

Domestic violence thrives when patterns are minimized or ignored. This legislation acknowledges reality, strengthens public safety, and places responsibility where it belongs—on those who repeatedly choose violence.

Too many times in my short time as Board President, have I personally been contacted by law enforcement to come to the assistance of a woman in need of emergency and safe haven. Over 50% of these times, the victimizer has done this before.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Avenues, and the survivors and families we serve across Missouri, we respectfully ask for your support of this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Rose Ghattas
President, Board of Directors
Avenues



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SAMANTHA JONES		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/6/2026 9:07 AM
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Domestic violence is a serious issue and offenders should be noted. Domestic violence is one of the largest threats to the health and safety of women and children it results in battery and death. To protect people overall having such a list similar to that of sex offenders would go a long way to protecting people at risk. It would also help prevent people with this history of violence from working in jobs that would put them in career roles that would increase the violence.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SHERRY L BUCHANAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/5/2026 7:40 PM	
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MO has ignored the lethality and psychological terror of domestic violence for far too long. These measures should be enshrined.



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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: 2/5/2026 1:08 PM	

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I submit this testimony in opposition to HB 2997 as currently drafted, not because domestic violence is insufficiently serious, but because this bill repeats structural defects that courts have already warned legislatures about in other public-registry schemes.

A public database of repeat domestic violence offenders can be lawful, but only when it is narrowly tailored, procedurally sound, and clearly regulatory rather than punitive. HB 2997 fails that test.

1. The Registry Operates as Additional Punishment, Not Regulation

Although framed as a public-safety measure, the registry is imposed in addition to criminal sentencing, triggered automatically by conviction, funded through mandatory offender fees, and enforced by new criminal penalties for noncompliance. This structure mirrors punitive registries that courts have scrutinized under due process and ex post facto principles.

Labeling a registry “civil” does not make it so.

When the effect is ongoing restraint, public shaming, and new criminal exposure, courts evaluate function, not title.

2. Insufficient Procedural Safeguards

HB 2997 provides no individualized risk assessment, no evidentiary hearing on dangerousness, and no meaningful opportunity for early removal based on rehabilitation or changed circumstances. Registration duration is dictated solely by conviction count, not actual risk.

This creates a one-size-fits-all outcome that undermines both fairness and public confidence, and exposes the state to constitutional challenge.

3. Public Disclosure Without Clear Necessity or Limitation

The bill authorizes broad internet publication of identifying information without requiring a showing that public disclosure is necessary to protect a specific class of persons. Courts have repeatedly distinguished law-enforcement access from general public dissemination, and HB 2997 collapses that distinction without justification.

If the purpose is victim safety, the bill should explain why existing tools—orders of protection, supervised probation, firearm restrictions, and offender monitoring—are insufficient.

4. Revenue Structure Raises Due Process Concerns

Funding the registry through mandatory offender fees tied to compliance creates a pay-to-punish mechanism that risks disproportionate impact on indigent defendants and invites claims that registration is being used as a revenue device rather than a safety tool.

5. Cross-Bill Pattern and Legislative Risk

HB 2997 is substantially similar to other registry-expansion bills introduced this session under different names.

This pattern signals policy acceleration without legal refinement, increasing the likelihood that Missouri adopts a framework already vulnerable to federal challenge.

Passing duplicative bills without correcting known defects does not strengthen public safety—it multiplies litigation risk.

Conclusion

Domestic violence policy must be strong and lawful. HB 2997, as written, prioritizes symbolic action over constitutional durability. A registry that collapses under judicial review helps no victims and undermines trust in the system meant to protect them.

Missouri should not advance a public database unless it is narrowly tailored, procedurally fair, and demonstrably regulatory rather than punitive. This bill is not yet there.

Lawmakers who intend to serve in future legislatures should begin by voting no on bills that feel right but are drafted wrong. Protecting victims and respecting constitutional limits are not competing goals — they are inseparable. Missouri does not need laws that gesture at safety; it needs laws that withstand scrutiny and actually work.

Footnotes:

U.S. Const. amend. XIV — Procedural Due Process Clause.

Government action that imposes ongoing restraints, public stigma, or additional penalties must include adequate notice, an opportunity to be heard, and individualized assessment before deprivation of liberty or property interests.

U.S. Const. art. I, § 10 — Ex Post Facto Clause.

Laws that retroactively increase punishment or impose new burdens tied to prior convictions are subject to heightened constitutional scrutiny, regardless of whether the legislature labels the scheme “civil” or “regulatory.”

Missouri Constitution, art. I, §§ 2 & 10 — Due Process and Equal Protection.

Missouri provides independent due-process protections that prohibit arbitrary or blanket classifications untethered to individualized findings of risk or necessity.

Smith v. Doe, 538 U.S. 84 (2003).

While upholding Alaska’s sex-offender registry, the Court emphasized that registries survive constitutional review only when their effects are nonpunitive in purpose and operation. Subsequent courts have distinguished registries that impose affirmative restraints or resemble additional punishment.

Does #1–5 v. Snyder, 834 F.3d 696 (6th Cir. 2016).

A registry may violate the Ex Post Facto Clause when it imposes ongoing burdens, public exposure, and restrictions that function as punishment, notwithstanding legislative intent to label it civil.