



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 3054		DATE: 4/15/2026	
COMMITTEE: Judiciary			
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. A.C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER: 314-440-9000	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCACY		TITLE: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1535			
CITY: O'FALLON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63366
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/15/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: DAVID J KLARICH		PHONE NUMBER: 314-560-1616	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI CIRCUIT JUDGES' ASSOCIATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 438 GATEFORD DRIVE			
CITY: BALLWIN		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63021
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/15/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KORTNIE HUDDLESTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/1/2026 9:32 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I stand in strong opposition to HB3054 (Keathley). This legislation presents a dual threat to accountable governance, merging a deeply troubling attack on public transparency with a transparently political manipulation of our judicial system.

The proposed jurisdiction shift to move Cole County into the Eastern District Court of Appeals is court-packing through gerrymandering, and its supporters reveal its true motive. The anti-abortion organizations' support of these bills is a clear signal that this is a form of jurisdictional forum-shopping, an attempt to place appeals from state government before a specific bench perceived as more favorable. This politicizes the judiciary, treating appellate districts as political territory to be gerrymandered rather than neutral venues for justice. Using arguments about efficiency and security to mask this power grab is an insult to the intelligence of Missourians.



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INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KORTNIE HUDDLESTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/15/2026 11:01 PM	

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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL DREYER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/15/2026 11:00 PM	

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WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL DREYER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/1/2026 9:31 PM	
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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: 4/15/2026 6:36 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

This bill decides where the people of Missouri are allowed to challenge the laws passed in this building.

Not whether they can challenge them—but where.

And that distinction matters more than it sounds.

Under this proposal, if a citizen believes a law is unconstitutional, they cannot bring that challenge in their own community. They cannot go to their local court. They cannot rely on the same access to justice that exists for other types of cases. They are required—by statute—to take that challenge to a single, centralized venue.

So the question becomes simple.

Why?

Why should the location of a legal challenge be restricted when the law itself applies everywhere?

Why should a citizen in a rural county, or a working parent, or someone without significant resources, be required to navigate a distant court system just to question whether a law is valid?

And more directly—

Why should the General Assembly have the authority to decide where it can be sued?

Because that is what this does.

It removes the natural distribution of judicial review and replaces it with a controlled point of entry.

It does not eliminate challenges—it concentrates them.

And when you concentrate all challenges into one place, you are not just organizing the system. You are shaping it. You are determining the environment, the access, and the practical difficulty of bringing a case forward.

This bill also raises the stakes of getting it wrong.

Venue is no longer a correctable issue—it becomes a basis for dismissal or forced transfer.

That increases the procedural burden on individuals while creating predictability for institutional defendants.

This is not about efficiency. It is about control.

The courts are not an extension of the legislature.

They are the check on it.

And that check only works if it remains accessible, distributed, and independent in practice—not just in theory.

Legislative Notice:

Let the record reflect:

This legislation requires that challenges to the validity of Missouri laws be brought in a single, state-designated venue, eliminating local access to judicial review.

It concentrates the point of legal challenge into one jurisdiction, shaping the conditions under which the state may be sued.

It imposes practical barriers on citizens seeking to challenge laws, including geographic and resource-based limitations.

It increases procedural risk for plaintiffs through strict venue enforcement.

It alters the balance between legislative authority and judicial access by allowing the state to dictate where it may be challenged.

If the law is strong, it shouldn't need a home-field advantage.

For these reasons, I stand in opposition.



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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: 4/1/2026 7:52 AM	

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HB 3054 modifies judicial district alignment and imposes mandatory venue requirements for constitutional and statutory challenges, raising significant constitutional concerns regarding access to the courts, separation of powers, due process, and forum manipulation.

While presented as a procedural adjustment, the bill functionally centralizes jurisdiction over constitutional challenges into a single county—Cole County—regardless of where the underlying harm occurred or where the parties reside. This represents a substantial departure from traditional venue principles, which are grounded in fairness, proximity, and the connection of the dispute to the forum.

This structure raises immediate concerns regarding access to the courts, as litigants across the state would be required to bring constitutional claims in a single, centralized forum. For many individuals, this imposes additional financial, logistical, and practical barriers to pursuing claims, effectively conditioning access to judicial review on the ability to litigate in a designated government-selected venue.

HB 3054 further implicates due process concerns, as venue is not merely procedural—it directly impacts the fairness and neutrality of proceedings. By mandating venue in a specific jurisdiction for a defined class of claims, the bill removes judicial discretion and eliminates case-by-case determinations of appropriate forum, regardless of the circumstances of the parties or the dispute.

The bill also raises serious separation of powers concerns by legislatively directing where constitutional challenges must be heard, thereby influencing the judicial process in a manner that may affect outcomes, case flow, and forum composition. Venue rules that systematically channel certain claims into a single jurisdiction risk being viewed as an attempt to structurally influence adjudication rather than merely organize it.

Additionally, the concentration of constitutional claims in a single county raises equal protection concerns, as similarly situated litigants are treated differently based solely on the nature of their claims. Those asserting constitutional or statutory challenges are subjected to heightened burdens not imposed on other civil litigants, including mandatory relocation of their claims to a specific jurisdiction.

The cumulative effect of these provisions—centralized venue, removal of judicial discretion, and disproportionate burdens on a defined class of claims—creates a framework susceptible to challenge as forum manipulation. Courts have historically scrutinized legislative efforts that alter procedural

rules in ways that materially disadvantage certain types of claims or litigants.

Bottom line:

HB 3054 mandates centralized venue for constitutional and statutory challenges in a manner that imposes additional burdens on litigants, removes judicial discretion, and alters the structural neutrality of the judicial process.

The General Assembly is hereby placed on notice that enactment of this provision may give rise to constitutional challenges, including but not limited to violations of access to the courts, due process, equal protection, and separation of powers, particularly where venue provisions operate to concentrate and control the forum for specific categories of claims.



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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: SHARON GEUEA JONES		PHONE NUMBER: 573-808-2156
REPRESENTING: MO ASSN OF TRIAL ATTYS		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: JC	STATE: MO	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/15/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ERIC D. JENNINGS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-526-4726	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF MISSOURI		TITLE: GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COUNSEL	
ADDRESS: 207 WEST HIGH STREET			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/15/2026 12:00 AM	
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