



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 3221		DATE: 4/7/2026	
COMMITTEE: Higher Education and Workforce Development			
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: 4/7/2026 11:47 PM	

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

I am in Support of this Bill and Funding Low-Earning Outcome Degree Programs. This Funding Needs \$72-Million in additional Funding to successfully operate and the Hiring of an Additional Full-Time Employee (F.T.E.).



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: JAMES HARRIS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-761-7875	
REPRESENTING: FGA ACTION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 74			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: james@thejharrisco.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 11:50 AM	

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

My client, FGA Action, is a national group that is working to help promote opportunity for the people of America by supporting common-sense reforms in the welfare, professional licensing, and education sectors.

Rep. Casteel's HB3221 mirrors language from the One Big, Beautiful Bill that cuts off access to student loans for educational programs that leave students worse off than if they had entered the workforce with a high school diploma or had pursued another degree. A college degree should result in higher earning opportunities for students, not put them deep in debt for a job that pays well below average.

Less than 1% of programs will be impacted – only 48 out of 4,916 programs – enrolling nearly 6,000 students in Missouri. Preventing state funds from being used for these dead-end programs will encourage students to pursue degrees that boost their incomes and will incentivize educational institutions to improve their offerings.

To reiterate: more than 99% of degree programs in the state will not be impacted by this. Only the least effective programs – those that put their graduates in a position to earn well below median earnings – will be impacted by this legislation.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ABIGAIL HERNDON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/3/2026 8:16 PM

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

This is financial and educational discrimination. Education is important, no matter what job field you go into. It helps a person grow and helps them be competent and qualified for whatever job they take. They may take a while but people pay their student loans. Younger generations have been told for decades that you have to go to college and get a degree if you want a good job. They never specified what career but that you gave to have a degree or some sort of tertiary education.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: BRIAN MILLNER		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-8787	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MO COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSN		TITLE: PRESIDENT	
ADDRESS: 2420 HYDE PARK			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: DAVA-LEIGH BRUSH		PHONE NUMBER: 314-600-6018	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI EQUITY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP		TITLE: PAL TEAM LEAD VOLUNTEER	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1352			
CITY: ST. CHARLES		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63302
EMAIL: dlb@missouriequity.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 12:26 PM	

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

The Missouri Equity Education Partnership opposes this bill. It presumes to see the future. First, there is based on the misguided Federal list of low-earning professions, yet the Sponsor admits it's not complete. Why would we codify something we do not fully understand. That is asking for unintended consequences. Next, we believe everyone deserves the chance to get the degree they choose. The sponsor did not present any facts or data supporting his position of return on investment. Some "low earning" degrees lead to more lucrative jobs. For example, people who go to law school often get degrees in history, political science and English. Furthermore, this bill will exacerbate the teacher shortage, creating a cycle, and we need teachers to want to come to/stay in Missouri. This bill creates a conundrum: We do not fund education adequately as a State, ergo teachers are low-pay jobs. Now we will not help people who need financial assistance to get a teaching certificate, and become teachers because they will not make enough money. This is counterintuitive. Finally, money/ROI is not the the only metric for "contributions."
 We oppose this bill.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: HEATHER FLEMING		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2026 1:53 PM
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People should be able to pursue whatever degree they'd like to pursue. Limiting funding opens the door to defunding education based up on the whim of those who value money over experience. Many of the "low-earning" careers are needed in our society and provide entry to more lucrative careers.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JOSEPH MORGAN ETHERIDGE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 12:51 PM	
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This bill would appear to kill the arts. If federal funding is being cut for majors on a massive scale, there is no reason to make cuts on the state level also. The objective is already reached. As a state we should not be discouraging the arts. The arts are vital and will always be relevant. People will always want to engage in entertainment, or have a great peice of art in their home. College trains the mind despite the major. It's something like a pressure cooker to produce a more productive individual. Having deadlines and doing the hard work promotes productivity. Productivity will always benefit the state, it doesn't matter the area of study.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: KATIE GAMBLE		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-4876	
REPRESENTING: INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 186S			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65102
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KIMBERLY MAXWELL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/5/2026 7:34 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



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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: 4/7/2026 11:38 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I urge you to oppose and vote "No" on HB3221 (Casteel). While claiming to improve accountability and prioritize workforce needs, these bills represent a direct attack on public higher education and a dangerous step toward restricting educational opportunity based on a narrow and punitive vision of a degree's value.

HB3221 seeks to prohibit state funding, including student financial aid, for any degree program deemed to have a "low-earning outcome" under a federal formula. This is a misguided policy that reduces the purpose of education to a simple return on investment. It ignores the immense civic, social, and personal value of fields like the arts, humanities, and social sciences. These programs teach critical thinking, communication, and cultural understanding—skills essential to a functioning democracy and a vibrant society. Tying funding exclusively to future earnings will penalize students who wish to pursue careers in teaching, social work, or the arts, fields that are essential to our communities but may not lead to high starting salaries. This bill will create a two-tiered system of education, where only the wealthy can afford to study subjects deemed unprofitable by the state, effectively shutting the door on low-income and working-class students who want to pursue their passions and contribute to society in meaningful ways.

This bill represents a coordinated effort to narrow the mission of our public universities, restrict student choice, and limit educational access based on income. We should be expanding opportunity, not creating new barriers based on a one-dimensional calculation of a graduate's potential earnings. I urge you to reject these harmful bills and instead commit to supporting a higher education system that is accessible, affordable, and rich with the full breadth of human knowledge.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LAUREN HERMANN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2026 10:48 AM	

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

I am a career educator and a resident of mid-Missouri. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 3221. This bill represents an overreach of state authority into the personal and academic lives of Missouri students. I oppose this legislation for two primary reasons. Who defines what a low-earning degree is? Financial outcomes at age 22 or 25 are not a holistic measure of a degree's value. Many programs that the state might deem "low-earning" provide the critical foundational skills that lead to highly lucrative and impactful careers later in life. By penalizing these programs, we are essentially cutting off the pipeline for future leaders in education, social services, and the arts. Additionally, the state should not be in the business of dictating what a student is allowed to study by weaponizing financial aid and institutional funding. Every Missourian should have the freedom to choose their own academic path based on their passions and goals, not a government-mandated salary threshold. Penalizing students with funding cuts or reduced scholarship access because their choice of study doesn't meet an arbitrary financial metric is a violation of the autonomy we should be encouraging in our higher education system. In my opinion, Missouri is stronger when we have a diverse workforce with a wide range of skills. I urge the committee to vote No on HB 3221 and trust Missouri students to decide their own futures.

Respectfully,

Dr. Lauren A Hermann



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LINDA HOECHST		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/5/2026 7:51 PM

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Many of the degrees affected form the foundation for higher earning degrees. Students need funding to advance.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LINDA KRAM		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/6/2026 4:56 PM
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MARILYN MCLEOD		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 10:03 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

This bill seems to have as its basic premise that making a lot of money is the only reason we should value higher education. It would eliminate funding for various programs that could lead to so-called "low earning" careers. Does that mean that some programs, (like art, music, theater, education, librarianship, history, literature, social work, etc.) which might not guarantee "high earnings", would lose financial support from the government? Although one would hope that having a college education would lead to a good financial situation, the value of an education for individuals and for society is far more than a paycheck.

Not to forget that some careers - mostly held by female workers - often get low earnings, but are actually careers that are very important to our society. Think "teachers", for example. The future of our entire population rests on the shoulders of good teachers.

And what do we remember and cherish about great civilizations of the past? Their art, their architecture, their literature, their music, their ideas; not the value of their financial portfolios.



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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: 4/7/2026 11:37 PM	

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

I urge you to oppose and vote "No" on HB3221 (Casteel). While claiming to improve accountability and prioritize workforce needs, these bills represent a direct attack on public higher education and a dangerous step toward restricting educational opportunity based on a narrow and punitive vision of a degree's value.

HB3221 seeks to prohibit state funding, including student financial aid, for any degree program deemed to have a "low-earning outcome" under a federal formula. This is a misguided policy that reduces the purpose of education to a simple return on investment. It ignores the immense civic, social, and personal value of fields like the arts, humanities, and social sciences. These programs teach critical thinking, communication, and cultural understanding—skills essential to a functioning democracy and a vibrant society. Tying funding exclusively to future earnings will penalize students who wish to pursue careers in teaching, social work, or the arts, fields that are essential to our communities but may not lead to high starting salaries. This bill will create a two-tiered system of education, where only the wealthy can afford to study subjects deemed unprofitable by the state, effectively shutting the door on low-income and working-class students who want to pursue their passions and contribute to society in meaningful ways.

This bill represents a coordinated effort to narrow the mission of our public universities, restrict student choice, and limit educational access based on income. We should be expanding opportunity, not creating new barriers based on a one-dimensional calculation of a graduate's potential earnings. I urge you to reject these harmful bills and instead commit to supporting a higher education system that is accessible, affordable, and rich with the full breadth of human knowledge.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: NANCY COPENHAVER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/7/2026 2:09 PM

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As a retired teacher with three degrees from a Missouri State University, Truman, I find this bill ridiculous. For the last 50 years since I earned my degrees, the state of Missouri has consistently cut the amount of support it gives to public institutions of higher education. This is a core responsibility of the state, to see that it has an educated workforce, not just for jobs that have high incomes. This is a general benefit to all Missouri citizens, not just those getting the education. My chosen career has been a low paying one, but one I think is critical for ALL other careers, educating the future citizens. Educators in Missouri are paid near the bottom of all the states. Although I had two Masters Degrees and was at the top of the salary schedule, when I retired I was making just under \$35,000. But the education provided to me by Missouri institutions was immeasurable, and the many students I impacted in my career benefited greatly from my training/education.

Passing this bill would only help reduce the ability of young people to pursue education and harm everyone. The same is true of many other majors that are not high paid, such as social work (my sister spent her career in Missouri with her degree) and many other worthwhile majors, such as religion, law enforcement, political science, music and the arts, etc. My husband with his music education degrees from Missouri public colleges made a bigger difference in the lives of thousands of students in his 45 years of teaching than a large majority of other people.

The worst part of this bill is that I thought Missourians preferred local control and were proud of being the "Show Me State." Why on earth would we want to adopt a list of "forbidden college majors" that the Federal Government recommends??

What really needs to be done is for Missouri to adequately fund its community colleges, four-year institutions, and trade schools to make sure EVERY Missouri student has the opportunity to gain an education and skills that will benefit our society and our state for years to come.



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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: 4/7/2026 6:55 AM	
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This bill is being presented as accountability.
 It is not.

It is a state-enforced funding prohibition mechanism built on unstable federal criteria, and it exposes Missouri to serious constitutional, economic, and structural risk.

First, this bill delegates Missouri’s funding authority to a moving federal target. The definition of a “low-earning outcome degree program” is not created in Missouri statute—it is imported from federal law and updated annually.

That means Missouri law will effectively change without legislative action, state funding decisions will be dictated by federal agencies using federal datasets, and institutions will be forced to comply with standards this body does not control and cannot stabilize. That is not alignment—it is open-ended delegation of legislative authority, raising legitimate nondelegation concerns.

Second, the bill creates arbitrary and discriminatory funding classifications by conditioning access to public funding on a single metric: median earnings years after graduation. That metric ignores regional economies, public service career paths, caregiving realities, and long-term earnings growth. The result is a system that penalizes entire categories of lawful, accredited academic programs not because they lack value, but because they do not meet a narrow economic output.

That is not neutral policy—it is state-driven outcome discrimination that raises credible equal protection concerns, particularly where the impact falls on first-generation students, rural communities, and those entering public-service professions.

Third, the fiscal note makes clear this is not savings—it is extraction. The state reflects a \$20 to \$25 million benefit to general revenue, while colleges and universities simultaneously lose over \$21 to \$25 million annually.

That gap does not disappear. It is transferred. Programs are cut, tuition pressure increases, and students lose access to aid. This is not cost reduction; it is cost shifting from the state to institutions and ultimately to Missouri families.

Fourth, the bill establishes a coercive compliance structure. Institutions will not gradually adjust—they will preemptively eliminate programs to avoid financial penalties. Academic offerings will be shaped by

risk avoidance rather than educational or workforce need, and entire fields can be functionally erased without a direct legislative vote. This is not oversight—it is regulation through financial pressure.

Finally, the long-term harm is structural. This bill creates a mechanism where funding eligibility is tied to externally defined economic metrics that can change without legislative approval. Once that framework is in place, it will not remain limited. What begins with “low-earning programs” can expand to programs deemed low-demand, non-essential, or politically inconvenient.

This is how systems are reshaped—not through transparent reform, but through the gradual removal of financial viability.

Missouri has the authority to pursue accountability in higher education, but that authority must be exercised with clear standards, state control, and constitutional discipline.

This bill does the opposite. It delegates, it discriminates, and it shifts cost while reducing transparency.

For those reasons, I stand in firm opposition.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SUSAN GIBSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/5/2026 8:11 PM
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Please do not aid Rep. Casteel and Senator Brattin in their quest to make all Missourians miserable. Raise wages, require employers to provide robust earned benefits like family leave, and be glad to facilitate people doing what they want to do.