



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HCR 52		DATE: 4/1/2026	
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Tourism			
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	
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EMAIL: ArnieDienoff@Mail.Com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 4/1/2026 11:49 PM	

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

I am in Full Support of Recognizing Our Nation's 250-Birthday and Celebration in this House Concurrent Resolution.



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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 8:03 AM

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HCR 52 promotes statewide participation in coordinated commemorative and educational initiatives tied to the United States Semiquincentennial, raising significant constitutional concerns regarding state-sponsored narrative control, compelled expression, and viewpoint discrimination.

While presented as a celebratory resolution, the proposal establishes a framework in which the state actively shapes, promotes, and distributes a preferred civic and historical narrative through public programming, educational initiatives, and coordinated events. When government moves beyond facilitation and into narrative construction, it risks crossing from commemoration into state-directed ideological messaging.

This raises concerns under First Amendment principles, particularly where public institutions—such as schools and state-affiliated programs—may be used as vehicles to disseminate a singular, government-endorsed interpretation of history, patriotism, and national identity. The Constitution does not permit the state to prescribe orthodoxy in matters of opinion or compel alignment with preferred civic expression.

The integration of “educational initiatives” and “patriotic traditions” within a coordinated state framework raises compelled speech concerns, especially where participation may be expected, incentivized, or embedded within publicly funded institutions. Even indirect pressure to engage in or affirm state-preferred messaging implicates constitutional protections.

Additionally, the absence of statutory safeguards ensuring neutrality, viewpoint diversity, or academic independence creates a risk of viewpoint discrimination, as the state is positioned to elevate certain narratives while excluding or minimizing others. Government-directed historical framing, particularly when tied to public education, must remain open and non-prescriptive to avoid constitutional infirmity.

The resolution’s structure further raises equal protection concerns, as individuals who do not align with or wish to participate in state-endorsed messaging may be effectively excluded from full participation in publicly supported programs, events, or opportunities associated with the initiative.

The cumulative effect of these provisions—state coordination, narrative framing, and integration into public-facing institutions—creates a system that may function as state-sponsored narrative enforcement, rather than neutral commemoration.

Bottom line:

HCR 52 establishes a state-coordinated framework that risks transforming public commemoration into government-directed narrative promotion, implicating core constitutional protections.

The General Assembly is hereby placed on notice that implementation of this resolution may give rise to constitutional concerns, including compelled speech, viewpoint discrimination, and improper state influence over civic and historical expression under the First Amendment.