

HB 677 -- VISION EXAMINATIONS FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS

SPONSOR: Wells

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Professional Registration and Licensing by a vote of 24 to 0.

This bill removes the June 30, 2012 expiration date of the provisions requiring every child enrolling in kindergarten or first grade in a public school to receive one comprehensive vision examination.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Net Effect on General Revenue Fund of an income of \$0 in FY 2012, a cost of \$99,000 in FY 2013, and a cost of \$99,000 in FY 2014. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the program is working well and the expiration date needs to be removed. An eye examination is much more comprehensive than a vision screening, allowing for a more accurate diagnosis.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Wells; Mark Curtis, Missouri Optometric Association; and Liz Kostas.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that they are not opposed to the comprehensive vision examination but to repealing the expiration date on the program prior to the completion of the study by the Children's Vision Commission. More than half of parents have opted out of the examination.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons; Missouri State Medical Association; Joanna Derda, Missouri State Academy of Pediatrics; Jean Grabeel, Missouri Association of School Nurses; and Missouri National Education Association.