

HCS HJR 17 -- FREEDOM IN AGRICULTURE ACT

SPONSOR: Weter (Smith, 150)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Rural Community Development by a vote of 8 to 1.

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment establishes the Freedom in Agriculture Act which guarantees the right of Missouri citizens to grow crops, hunt and fish wildlife, and raise animals in a humane manner without the state imposing an undue economic burden on animal owners. No state law regulating the growing of crops, the right to hunt and fish wildlife, and the welfare of any animal can be valid unless based on generally accepted scientific principles and enacted by the General Assembly or established by a state department or agency through an administrative rule and reviewed by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules. No statute or regulation in effect as of the date of enactment of the resolution will be affected by these provisions.

If any provision of the act is found by a court to be unconstitutional, the remaining provisions will remain valid.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Net Effect on General Revenue Fund of an income of \$0 or a cost of More than \$7,000,000 in FY 2012, an income of \$0 or a cost of More than \$7,000,000 in FY 2013, and an income of \$0 in FY 2014. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill protects the state of Missouri from outside animal rights groups focused on eliminating animal agriculture in the state.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Smith (150); Missouri Federation of Animal Owners; Missouri Farm Bureau; Missouri Pork Association; and Missouri Cattlemen's Association.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that it is an overreaction to Proposition B passed in 2010 and will remove many current animal protections.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation; and Humane Society of the United States.