

HB 557 -- PROTECTION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

SPONSOR: Bahr

COMMITTEE ACTIONS: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Civil and Criminal Proceedings by a vote of 8 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Judiciary by vote of 7 to 3.

This bill specifies that the liberty of a parent to direct the upbringing, education, and care of his or her child is a fundamental right. The State of Missouri and any political subdivision of the state is prohibited from infringing on this right without demonstrating a compelling governmental interest. Any law or policy must be narrowly tailored and by the least restrictive means to achieve the interest. These provisions apply to all laws of the state, whether adopted before or after the enactment of these provisions. Any law adopted after the enactment of these provisions is exempt only if the law explicitly excludes the application by reference to these provisions.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill simply codifies existing Supreme Court law pertaining to parental rights, applying strict scrutiny to any government action that impacts parental rights.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Bahr; Jill Johnson; and Missouri Family Network.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.