

HCS HB 1696 -- DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMISSION

SPONSOR: Rowland (155)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with House Committee Substitute" by the Select Committee on Social Services by a vote of 9 to 0.

This bill specifies the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing must provide grants to organizations that provide services for deaf-blind children and their families, deaf-blind adults, and provide training for support service providers.

The commission must use a request-for-proposal process to award grants. Organizations that receive a grant may use it for any purpose authorized. The total amount of grants provided under the provisions of the bill must be capped at \$300,000 annually.

This bill is the same as HB 469 (2015).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill establishes a grant program to provide necessary services to deaf-blind individuals and their families. Today, deaf-blind people can do everything everyone else can do with the assistance of support service providers. The bill will allow deaf-blind individuals to go to work and school and will create new jobs in the support service provider field. The bill will also decrease deaf-blind individuals' reliance upon public assistance.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Rowland; Mary Hale; Karen Burnell Ruff, Southwest Center For Independent Living; Kathy Rennekamp, Sight And Sound Impaired Of St. Louis; Carmen Volland, Sight And Sound Impaired Of St. Louis; Jasmine Lewis; Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Missouri Commission For The Deaf And Hard Of Hearing; Larry Hoard; Scott Dollar; DeLinda Kelley, Midland Empire Resources For Independent Living; Barbara Tweedy, Sight And Sound Impaired Of St. Louis; and Marsha Lynn Martin, Sight And Sound Impaired Of St. Louis.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.