

HB 2589 -- CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

SPONSOR: Rehder

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 7 to 2. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 4.

This bill prohibits municipalities from enforcing any law, ordinance, or resolution that would restrict a person from exercising a right enumerated in the first amendment of the Constitution of the United States while such person is on a public sidewalk, street, avenue, alley, or other public place unless state law authorizes such restriction.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill protects freedom of speech for peaceful protesters. Because cities and towns were created by statute, the state has the right to restrict cities and towns.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Rehder; James Coyne; Jane Britton; Yvonne Rottjakob; Leslie Kerns, Pregnancy Help Center; Erma Stogsdill; Lois Hogan; Carol Fay; Karen Leydens; Missouri Right to Life; Jasha McQueen; Concerned Women for America of Missouri; Coalition for Life; Brian Westbrook, Coalition for Life, St Louis; Rev. Richard W. Frank; Richard Hronick; and Alan Mudd.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the city has the right to make a reasonable balance to protect the health and safety of patients and protesters. Protesters discourage patients from getting health care, even health care that is not related to abortion.

Testifying against the bill were Samantha Lund; National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL); Planned Parenthood Advocates in Missouri; and Charles Schlaepfer.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill offered technical corrections to the bill.

Testifying on the bill was the American Civil Liberties Union.