

HCS HB 292 -- STALKING

SPONSOR: Roberts

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 12 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 292.

This bill amends the definition of "course of conduct" within the definition of "stalking" as it is used in Chapter 455, RSMo, to mean two or more acts that serve no legitimate purpose including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through a third party follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to a person by any action, method, or device.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that our definition of "stalking" has not changed in a very long time, and it has been abused in its current form, often to the benefit of the stalker. It is very difficult to tell victims that nothing can be done in their situation because of the definition. Online stalking has grown exponentially and our current statute does not cover that. The definition needs to change so it can be more inclusive of the ever-changing technology. These days, people are able to track others through social media, and it is easy to get around restrictions because profiles can be established using false names.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Roberts; Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV); Janice Thompson Gehrke; and Lisa Saylor.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill submitted written testimony, which can be found on the bill page on the House website.

Testifying against the bill was the Missouri Pet Breeders Association.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.