



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 291</b>		DATE: <b>2/2/2021</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Public Safety</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>Dale Schmidt</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>15736946406</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION</b>		TITLE: <b>Executive Director</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>101 W. McCarty, Suite 200</b>			
CITY: <b>Jefferson City</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL: <b>dschmidt@mopoa.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/1/2021 2:06 PM</b>	

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

**This will provide law enforcement with another tool when an individual misleads an officer to intentional mislead the investigation.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KAREN AROESTY</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>3146271330</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>ADL HEARTLAND</b>		TITLE: <b>REGIONAL DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>222 SOUTH MERAMEC AVENUE, SUITE 301</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63105</b>
EMAIL: <b>karoesty@adl.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2021 7:16 AM</b>	

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**TO:** House Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety  
**FROM:** Karen Aroesty, Regional Director, ADL Heartland  
**RE:** HB 291

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Heartland office submits this written testimony in support of HB 291 and Representative Roberts' leadership on a highly volatile event when false reports are called into 911 or other emergency systems in an effort to victimize an individual on the basis of hate or any other reason. "Swatting" can and has resulted in injury to the target or other witnesses and has even caused fatalities. Moreover, it burdens already-limited police resources. Missouri law currently protects individuals against cyber-harassment, cyber-stalking and doxing. HB 291 would close a cyber protection gap on this unique form of electronic harassment. HB 291 is part of a national effort started by ADL in 2019 called Backspace Hate™. The initiative supports victims and targets of online hate and harassment by raising awareness and passing legislation to better hold perpetrators accountable for actions online, intentional actions that reflect a reckless disregard for potential harm on the ground, both to targets and to first responders. When harassment pushes targets offline, perpetrators spew hateful messages and silence valuable voices. It's time to backspace the hate and make room for good. Recent surveys on harassment online indicate that:

- 28% of respondents experienced severe online harassment, which includes sexual harassment, stalking, physical threats, swatting, doxing and sustained harassment;
- Over one-third (35%) of Americans who had been harassed reported they felt the harassment was a result of their sexual orientation, religion, race or ethnicity, gender identity, or disability. Around one-in-five respondents who had experienced online harassment believed it was because of religion (21%), which is nearly twice the amount reported in 2019. (11%). One-in-four (25%) respondents felt the focus of their harassment was gender and some 25% because of race or ethnicity, up significantly from the 15% reported previously. Around one-in-ten had been targeted as a result of sexual orientation (9%), occupation (12%), or disability (11%). One consequence of widespread online hate and harassment is that it leaves people worried about being a future target: 26% of those who had previously experienced harassment and 11% of Americans who had not experienced harassment reported anxiety about future harassment and altered their own online engagement. We can report a variety of swatting incidents in the region recently: <https://www.ky3.com/content/news/Ozark-swatting-scare-leaves-family-shaken-567500851.html> <https://www.nbc12.com/2019/09/15/swatting-prank-leads-chesterfield-couple-being-forced-home-gunpoint/> / In the difficult world of extremist activity, swatting is of significant concern: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/member-of-neo-nazi-group-pleads-guilty-to-swatting-conspiracy-of-journalists-minorities/2020/07/14/695f0e52-c5d4-11ea-8ffe-372be8d82298\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/member-of-neo-nazi-group-pleads-guilty-to-swatting-conspiracy-of-journalists-minorities/2020/07/14/695f0e52-c5d4-11ea-8ffe-372be8d82298_story.html) In conclusion, false reporting/swatting is an intentional act that seeks to cause harm by weaponizing law enforcement against the communities they serve and will undermine the many positive efforts at building community-police trust that is an important part of law

enforcement work today. ADL thanks Representative Roberts for his partnership and initiative on this very acute and unfortunately growing aspect of hate, technology, harassment and harm. We urge a positive vote on HB 291 and thank this Committee in advance for its consideration. We stand ready to respond to questions as appropriate. Respectfully submitted, Karen J. Aroesty Regional Director, ADL Heartland (Missouri, Eastern Kansas, Southern Illinois) 314.308.4890 [karoesty@adl.org](mailto:karoesty@adl.org) February 8, 2021



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MARK BRUNS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-690-0342</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>715 JEFFERSON STREET</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL: <b>mark@brunslobby.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2021 7:44 PM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b> <b>The Missouri Fraternal Order of Police supports HB291.</b>			