



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 294</b>		DATE: <b>2/9/2021</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Special Committee on Criminal Justice</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>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:                  ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>ArnieDienoff@Yahoo.Com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 11:49 PM</b>

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

**On face this Bill make sense. But I want to make sure that all of steps are still in tack like Trial DeNovel, Jury Trial, Right-of-Appeal and other rights.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MO DEL VILLAR</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>8169296166</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF MISSOURI</b>		TITLE: <b>LEGISLATIVE ASSOCIATE</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>406 W 34TH STREET SUITE 420</b>			
CITY: <b>KANSAS CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>64111</b>
EMAIL: <b>mdelvillar@aclu-mo.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/9/2021 4:22 PM</b>	

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

February 9, 2021 House Special Committee on Criminal Justice Chairman Dogan HB 294 House Hearing Room 6 Dear Honorable Committee Members: Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony today. On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri and our approximately 15,000 supporters statewide, I would like to express our support for HB 294. HB 294 would remove the need to act on arrest warrants for failure to respond, pay the fines, or appear in court for certain traffic citations. It would also lower penalties for traffic violations in line with our state's need for criminal justice reform. Generally, an unpaid ticket will stay on your record until you act to address it. After some time without handling the ticket, a "bench warrant" is issued by a judge for your arrest. Arrest warrants never expire until you "do the time or pay the fine." The court can issue a warrant years after you were first ticketed. There is no statute of limitations or set date range by which the courts must issue an arrest warrant. Any county can turn a legal issue into a bench warrant at any time – even years later. This bill looks to give leniency to those caught up in minor traffic infractions and helps restore confidence in the courts and law enforcement committed to public safety. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the most common reason for individual contact with the police is being a driver in a traffic stop. We have seen how these stops can be wielded as harmful practices against communities: In 2013, the municipal court in Ferguson, a city of 21,135 people, issued 32,975 arrest warrants for nonviolent offenses, mostly driving violations.[1] Similarly, Pine Lawn, another municipality in St. Louis County, has a population of only 3,275 and, in 2013, it issued 5,333 new warrants, bringing its total outstanding warrants to 23,457.[2] These practices are unconstitutional and set up de facto debtors prisons. Even though these underlying violations would not independently result in imprisonment, arrest and detention are not uncommon once a warrant enters on a case. This can turn into a waste of resources and precious law enforcement time. The Department of Justice's investigation of the Ferguson Police Department found overwhelming evidence of minor municipal code violations resulting in multiple arrests, jail time, and fines and fees that exceeded the cost of the original ticket several times over. In 2020, over 45,000 Missourians received misdemeanor charges for speeding which result in significant fines and even incarceration. Missouri should move away from this policing for profit model and toward criminal justice reform. Thousands of Missourians are a traffic stop away from being jailed for offenses as minor as not paying a traffic ticket. This bill helps to address these concerns in causing Missourians to be caught up in the criminal justice system for minor infractions. I urge this committee to support this bill and vote HB 294 out of committee. I am available to answer any questions that you might have going forward. Thank you again for your consideration. Best, Mo Del Villar Legislative Associate American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri [1] Shapiro, J. (2014). In Ferguson, Court fines and fees fuel anger. NRP. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2014/08/25/343143937/in-ferguson-court-fines-and-fees-fuel-anger>. [2] ArchCity

Defenders. (2014). Municipal Courts White Paper. Retrieved from <https://03a5010.netsolhost.com/WordPress/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/ArchCity-Defenders-Municipal-Courts-Whitepaper.pdf>