



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 306		DATE: 2/17/2021	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: DR. BETH WINTON		PHONE NUMBER: 573-230-9082	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: ADVISORY COUNCIL ON GIFTED EDUCATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 5603 MAJESTIC CIRCLE			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65203
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/17/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: KYNA IMAN		PHONE NUMBER: 314-651-1185	
REPRESENTING: GIFTED ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 1483			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65102
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/17/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MEREDITH GAYLE WISNIEWSKI		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: mburs10@hotmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/13/2021 12:25 PM	
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My name is Meredith Wisniewski, and I am the President of the Gifted Association of Missouri. I am also a teacher with Phelps Center for Gifted Education in Springfield. Today I respectfully request your support for House Bill 306, which would mandate gifted education in our great state. Gifted education has erroneously been referred to as a privilege, when it is in fact an undisputed right. Our students deserve educational opportunities that take their unique needs into account. While it is often assumed that gifted students will just naturally “get it” on their own, that is far from the truth. They need support and guidance to help them reach their full potential just like all other students. This requires programs specifically designed to meet the needs of gifted learners, along with teachers who understand how gifted minds work. This is why House Bill 306 addresses more than just the existence of gifted programming -- it also highlights the necessity for properly trained teachers to do this important work. Now, more than ever, gifted students need us. They need to be reassured that they matter and that they are seen -- and, most importantly, that they are understood. These are the students who, with the right encouragement, will change the world. Their enthusiasm and creativity can move mountains, but that motivation is lost when they feel stifled. Simply saying that gifted students will thrive if they are given harder work to do without any specialized social and emotional support shows a fundamental misunderstanding of what it means to be gifted. Many gifted students, particularly those with limited or no access to gifted programming, come to resent education when they feel it has done nothing for them. Our state prides itself on its education system, and joining the majority of other states in the U.S. that mandate gifted education would be an emphatic reminder of our commitment to serving learners at all levels. House Bill 306 is not about elevating gifted students above others. Instead, it is written to show that ALL students deserve access to developmentally appropriate education. How can anyone argue that it is appropriate to deny some students that right? With recent attention focused on the concepts of equity and access, this is the perfect time to demonstrate what that can mean for gifted learners. You now have the opportunity to show gifted students that they are an essential part of the educational system and that you believe in them. Thank you for your support.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: NIKKE VEIT		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 2/17/2021 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: OTTO FAJEN		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-3202
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI NEA		TITLE: LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
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CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL: otto.fajen@mnea.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/16/2021 8:57 PM

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Missouri NEA Testimony on HB 306 to the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee February 17, 2021
Otto Fajen, MNEA Legislative Director
The Association appreciates the opportunity to present written testimony regarding HB 306. The Association supports the bill as filed. HB 306 would require districts and charter schools to identify and provide services and programs for gifted children. The bill would require a district to establish a gifted education program if three percent or more are identified as gifted. Districts with an average daily attendance of 350 students or less will not be required to provide services by a teacher certified to teach gifted education. The Association believes that gifted and talented students need a challenging curriculum and a program that identifies and supports their unique needs. For this basic reason, the Association supports the bill. On behalf of the Association, I thank you for the opportunity to offer our testimony on this bill.
Otto Fajen
MNEA Legislative Director



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: RUTH ELIZABETH CAPLINGER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: recaplinger2@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/15/2021 3:06 PM	
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I would like to encourage you to vote in favor of HB306 mandating gifted education. Missouri is one of the few states in the nation that does not mandate special services for students of high intelligence. As a result, many students who need these services do not have access to them. For over two decades, it has been my privilege to teach gifted students. It has also been my privilege to hear back from many of these students and/or their parents regarding the positive differences their participation in gifted services made for them. For many gifted students, school is a day-in, day-out exercise in frustration. If you have had the experience of attending a meeting where you already had the needed information and yet were required to remain for several hours of your valuable time, then you can imagine the daily grind for some of these students, and perhaps even the emotional toll that it can take on them. Classrooms that provide not only challenge, but intellectual camaraderie are respites for many of our high I.Q. students. I have had both students and students' parents express to me that our gifted classroom was the "safe space" that they needed to cope with the rest of their school week. Unfortunately, many of the talents of gifted students are lost. Turned off by their school experiences, some gifted students dropout of school and even out of society. Every child should have the right to learn something new every day. Every student should have the right to reach his or her potential, no matter how high that potential may be. Participation in gifted programming gives students a better opportunity to reach their full potential. Students are able to learn at a faster pace and explore subject matter that may not be available to them in the regular classroom. It is especially imperative that intellectually advanced students have access to teachers who are certified in gifted education. These educators are specifically trained to address the social and emotional differences caused by the asynchronous development that often accompanies a high IQ. Teachers of gifted and talented students also serve as a resource for overwhelmed parents and regular classroom teachers. Again, I hope you will vote in favor of HB306. It is a vote for our brightest students and truly a vote for the future of Missouri. Thank you for taking time to read my thoughts.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: ArnieDienoff@Yahoo.Com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/17/2021 12:38 AM
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I am opposed to this Bill This is Local Control Issue Gift Education shall be a Local Decision and not forced upon Local School Districts by the State