

HB 1481 -- SCHOOL PROTECTION OFFICERS

SPONSOR: Dinkins

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Public Safety by a vote of 7 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 0.

Currently, school districts may designate teachers or administrators to be school protection officers. This bill adds other designated school personnel to the list of employees a school district may designate as a school protection officer.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this will provide school districts with more discretion for what they are allowed to do in designating people to be school protection officers. This is important in rural communities where you do not necessarily have local law enforcement to respond to emergencies. Some superintendents feel they have people in their schools who are more qualified to be school protection officers than the teachers they have on staff. Plus, having teachers be the protection officers means they have to make a decision whether to leave the students or stay with them. It would be great for schools to have the leeway to find the best person in their school district to be designated as school protection officer. There are, as of August, 42 school staff across the state that are trained as school protection officers. A school protection officer has to complete 112 hours of basic training for the academy and then 18 hours every two years.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dinkins; Susan Myers; Missouri Association of School Administrators; and Amy Roderick, Missouri School Boards' Association Center For Education.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill submitted their testimony in writing.

Testifying against the bill were Erin Gray; Susan Gibson; Tara Reuter Johnson; Arnie C. Dienoff.

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.