



Missouri House of Representatives

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Missouri House Passes Comprehensive Public Safety and Crime Prevention Bill

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – In a significant move towards enhancing public safety and addressing crime prevention, the Missouri House successfully passed HB 1659 this week. This comprehensive legislation, mirroring the SB 189 legislative package vetoed in 2023, garnered bipartisan support with a resounding 126-20 vote.

The bill, which builds upon the governor's concerns outlined in the previous veto letter, introduces various modifications to public safety provisions, and aims to create a safer environment for Missourians. Among the key provisions of HB 1659 are measures to tackle gun law violations, including the prohibition of celebratory gunfire, known as "Blair's Law." Additionally, the bill seeks to increase penalties for unlawful use of a firearm, using a gun in the commission of a crime, and holds adults criminally liable for gun crimes committed by juveniles if they are proven to have encouraged such behavior.

The legislation also addresses several critical aspects of the legal system's treatment of young offenders. Notable provisions include empowering courts to treat young individuals (between 14 and 18 years old) as adults for serious offenses, implementing correctional treatment programs for young offenders, and imposing stricter penalties for persistent offenders.

"HB 1659 reflects a collaborative effort to address pressing issues in our criminal justice system," Rep. Lane Roberts, R-Joplin, said. "We have worked diligently to address concerns raised in the past and present a robust legislative package that promotes justice, accountability, and the safety of our communities. By enacting these measures, we aim to create a better environment for all residents of Missouri."

The legislation also includes provisions related to wrongful convictions, armed criminal action, cyberstalking and harassment, endangering the welfare of a child, protection of law enforcement animals, drug trafficking, civilian oversight divisions for police actions, and support for the Office of Public Defender.

House Speaker Dean Plocher, R-Des Peres, expressed his support for the bill, stating, "The passage of HB 1659 demonstrates our commitment to strengthening public safety and confronting crime on our streets. These comprehensive measures not only enhance penalties but also introduce crucial changes to the rules governing offenses, ultimately enhancing the protection of our communities. This collective effort will contribute to a safer and more secure Missouri."

The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration, and with the inclusion of an emergency clause, the legislation has the potential for swift passage into law, further emphasizing the urgency and importance of these public safety measures.

The proposed changes in HB 1659 mark a significant step forward in addressing the evolving challenges faced by Missouri communities, and the state legislature remains dedicated to ensuring the well-being and security of its citizens.

Representative Lane Roberts, a Republican, represents part of Jasper and Newton counties (District 161) in the Missouri House of Representatives. He was elected to his first two-year term in November 2018. For more information, please contact Rep. Roberts' office at 573-751-3791 or by email at Lane.Roberts@House.Mo.Gov.

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