

HB 196 -- STATUTE OF LIMITATION FOR ARSON

SPONSOR: Wildberger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill extends the statute of limitation from three to five years for the crimes of arson in the first degree, arson in the second degree, and knowingly burning or exploding property.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of Less than \$100,000 in FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that arson is one of the most difficult crimes to prosecute and often takes a long time to gather sufficient evidence. Currently, only 16% of arson crimes result in an arrest, and only 2% result in a conviction. Some states have a statute of limitation of 10 years for arson crimes. Extending the limitation to five years will give law enforcement more time to prosecute these difficult cases.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Wildberger; Missouri Sheriffs Association; Missouri State Council of Firefighters; Professional Firefighters of Eastern Missouri; and State Fire Marshal.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Richard Smreker, Senior Legislative Analyst