

HCS HB 1331 -- VICTIMS' RIGHTS

SPONSOR: Pietzman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 9 to 0.

Currently, a victim may submit a written statement, or appear personally or by counsel before the court prior to the court's acceptance of a plea bargain. This bill allows the victim to submit statements or appear personally or by counsel prior to the court's acceptance of a plea of guilt.

This bill adds provisions allowing the family members of a victim to submit written statements to or appear personally or by counsel before the court, on behalf of or in addition to a victim under 18 years of age. A victim or a victim's immediate family member shall be notified of the rights granted to a victim under Article I, Section 32 of Missouri's Constitution and Section 595.209, RSMo.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this would allow family members of victims to submit statements to the court prior to the court accepting a plea deal. There have been many victims and their families who have expressed disappointment that they were not heard prior to the court accepting a deal and the deal ended up really low.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Pietzman.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.