

HB 2336 -- CUSTODY OF CHILDREN

SPONSOR: Tate

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 7 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 12 to 0.

This bill specifies that a child taken into the custody of the state or a child under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court shall not be reunited with a parent or placed in a home in which a parent or any person residing in the home has been found guilty of sexual trafficking of a child in the first degree.

Additionally, in any court proceedings relating to child custody, the court shall not award custody or unsupervised visitation, or visitation to a parent not granted custody, of a child to a parent if such parent or any person residing with such parent has been found guilty of or has pled guilty to sexual trafficking of a child in the first degree.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this fixes something that was missed in the 2014 criminal code revision. All it does is prohibit someone who has been convicted of sex trafficking from getting custody of a child. If the child ends up in a home where a spouse was convicted of such offense, there is usually a backup plan to ensure the child is never left alone with the individual.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Tate; Department of Social Services; Missouri Kids First; Foster Adopt Connect; and Missouri Coalition of Children's Agencies.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.