

HB 900 -- STRATEGIC LAWSUITS AGAINST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

SPONSOR: Lovasco

This bill relates to strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP). The bill specifies that all laws in Missouri must be construed to afford qualified immunity from suit and liability for any defendant or counter-defendant in any action that impacts the defendant's or counter-defendant's First Amendment rights, and the bill provides procedures for defending against such suits. If a person successfully defends against a SLAPP lawsuit, the person may bring a SLAPP-back claim to recover any damages, costs, and fees the trial court failed to grant. Such damages, fees, and costs include statutory damages of at least \$10,000, compensatory damages, additional damages to the plaintiff in an amount calculated to deter the SLAPP plaintiff from bringing future SLAPP lawsuits, and attorneys' fees and costs.