



*Seeking Justice with the Love of God*

May 10, 2022

The Honorable Dave Schatz  
President Pro Tem, Missouri Senate  
201 West Capitol Avenue  
Room 326  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Re: Floor vote on HB 1724 to protect religious students at Missouri's public institutions of higher education

Dear Senator Schatz:

Christian Legal Society respectfully requests HB 1724 be brought to the Senate floor for debate and a vote. Christian Legal Society ("CLS") is a national association of attorneys, law students, and law professors, including attorney chapters in St. Louis and Kansas City. CLS has student chapters at the University of Missouri—Kansas City, University of Missouri—Columbia, and Washington University. CLS law student chapters typically are small groups of students who meet for weekly prayer, Bible study, and worship at a time and place convenient to the students. All students are welcome at CLS meetings.

Christian Legal Society supports HB 1724 because it will provide much needed protection for religious students' ability to meet on public college campuses. HB 1724 is commonsense legislation that will conserve taxpayer dollars by preventing costly litigation that has resulted in other states, including Iowa and Michigan, when the University of Iowa and Wayne State University adopted policies excluding religious student groups from campus because they require their leaders to agree with their core religious beliefs. (This problem arose at a public university in Missouri as recently as 2016.)

HB 1724 benefits public college administrators by giving them clear guidance as to their duty to treat religious student groups fairly. Recently, University of Iowa administrators were found personally liable for money damages for their treatment of religious student groups. HB 1724 allows Missouri public universities to maintain whatever policies they choose as long as those policies permit religious student organizations to choose their leaders according to their religious beliefs.

Clear guidance for administrators is particularly necessary in light of the Biden Administration's notice that it is likely to rescind current federal regulations protecting religious student groups. HB 1724 provides a safety net for Missouri's religious students of all faiths.

Finally, HB 1724 will add Missouri to the expanding list of 17 states – Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Virginia – that have enacted similar protections for religious or belief-based student groups.

Please bring HB 1724 to the Senate floor for debate and a vote. Thank you for supporting religious freedom.

Yours truly,

/s/ David Nammo  
Executive Director  
Christian Legal Society  
dnammo@clsnet.org