

# Senate Judiciary Committee

*Brendan Bunnell 271-4063*

**HB 1423-FN**, relative to the offense of improper influence.

**Hearing Date:** March 31, 2026

**Time Opened:** 1:58 p.m.

**Time Closed:** 2:07 p.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Gannon, Abbas, Altschiller and Reardon

**Members of the Committee Absent:** Senator Carson

**Bill Analysis:** This bill expands the offense of improper influence to include threats to immediate family members of a public servant, party official, or voter. This bill further provides mandatory minimum penalties for the certain violations of the offense.

---

**Sponsors:**

Rep. Ammon

Rep. Giasson

Rep. Thibault

Rep. Sirois

Rep. Aures

Rep. Labrie

Rep. Popovici-Muller

Rep. Belcher

---

**Who supports the bill:** Representative Keith Ammon and Representative Daniel Popovici-Muller.

**Who opposes the bill:** Cory Stone and Nathaniel Blair.

**Summary of the testimony presented:**

**Representative Keith Ammon** introduced the bill, explaining that it had come about as a result of an experience he had endured in 2021. He had put this experience out of his mind but the recent political violence that occurred last year had prompted him to revisit the issue.

- Explained that an individual had disagreed with his political views and had threatened both him and his wife with sexual and physical violence.
- Explained that the offender had been ordered to pay a 1,240 dollar fine, which was waived, and had been told that he could not speak to the representative. He was also made to write the representative an apology letter. Representative

Ammon stated that he had considered the sentence for the offender to be fairly minimal.

- Explained that this bill would modify the existing statute to include threats made against the family of public servant, party official, or voter in cases where the intention was to influence the decision-making process of that victim.
- Stated that in his case, the threats against his family were not considered by the court. He explained that this bill would introduce a minimum penalty of 1,000 dollars per individual threatened and include a one-year sentence. He stated that this would require extreme threats to be executed upon. Stated that this bill had passed the House floor 174-158.
- Expressed that his own personal experiences led him to believe that the judiciary had too much discretion in these types of cases.
- Senator Gannon asked how severe a threat would need to be in order to fall under the penalties in this bill.
  - Representative Ammon stated that this would be up to the judge or jury to decide, explaining that the court had whatever discretion they found in the language of the bill.
- Senator Gannon stated that he understood the need for mandatory minimums in such cases. He asked for further context on the vote in the House.
  - Representative Ammon explained that the vote had not been split along party lines and that there had been some crossover.
- Senator Reardon asked about the language within line 13 of the bill and questioned whether it ought to be expanded to explicitly include emotional injury, to ensure that cases similar to that which the representative had suffered would be covered under the court's discretion, given that the definition of "harm" in this section only included disadvantage or injury.
  - Representative Ammon clarified that his case had featured explicit ramblings without any ambiguity that had threatened both himself and his family with harm. He expressed his understanding that the law needs to be written to apply to all cases of threatening.
- Senator Gannon expressed that the bill ought to apply to cases where an individual used ambiguous language like "I hope" in order to avoid the charge of threatening. He asked whether this would be left to the courts' discretion.

- o Representative Ammon stated that it would probably be left to the courts to determine whether an individual was using that language as a protective measure.

BMB

Date Hearing Report completed: April 3, 2026