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This week the Missouri House passed legislation that would protect mourners at a military funeral from being harassed by picketers. The House approved HB 276, 233 & 274 by voice vote Tuesday.

Under the bill, it would be a misdemeanor to protest within 500 feet of a cemetery, mortuary, church or other house of worship from two hours before a funeral to two hours after the ceremony. Violators would face as long as six months in jail. An amendment added on the House floor would allow those grieving the loss of a loved one to file a civil suit against protestors for emotional distress.

This legislation will protect Missouri families from the despicable actions of those who would protest the funeral of an individual who gave his or her life for this country. We're sending a strong message to groups like the Westboro Baptist Church that their actions won't be tolerated in our state. Not only will protesting be a crime but families will be allowed to hit protesters where it counts – in the pocket book.”

HB 276, 233 & 274 requires another vote in the House before moving to the Senate for consideration.

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