



NEWS

From the Office of Representative
Bob Dixon

140th District

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CONTACT: Rep. Bob Dixon
573-751-9809
417-343-9560

House Committee Hears Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights

Rep. Bob Dixon's Bill Draws Overwhelming Support from Witnesses

Jefferson City, MO — On Wednesday, February 27, 2008, Representative Bob Dixon (R-Springfield) presented House Bill 1611 before the Special Committee on Family Services. Also known as the "Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights," House Bill 1611 affords certain protections in the courtroom to child witnesses. Among others, these safeguards include the right to a comfort item, the right to a support person while testifying, and the right to testify at a time of day favorable to the child.

"Justice can not be served when a child victim is further traumatized in court," said Rep. Bob Dixon. "We must make the courtroom a safe environment where an abused child can tell the judge and jury what has happened to them. The Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights ensures that certain common courtesies are afforded to these children."

The bill emerged as the result of a collaborative effort to address the high number of reported child abuse cases in Greene County—the highest throughout the state. Many of those who have taken an active role in this effort testified in support of the bill: Darrell Moore, Green County Prosecutor; Barbara Brown, Executive Director of the Springfield Child Advocacy Center; Heather Trinca, President of the Junior League of Springfield; and former foster youth Lacey Kendrick.

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