



# NEWS

From the Office of Representative  
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140<sup>th</sup> District

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## **House Committee Passes Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights** *Bill Sponsored by Rep. Dixon Receives Unanimous Approval of Committee*

**Jefferson City, MO** — Today, the House Special Committee on Family Services voted to approve a committee substitute for House Bill No. 1611, sponsored by Representative Bob Dixon (R-Springfield). Rep. Dixon introduced HB 1611, which creates a "Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights" for children testifying in court, specifying how child witnesses should be treated.

"Although I have been particularly concerned by Greene County's child abuse and neglect figures, the Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights will positively impact the treatment of child witnesses throughout Missouri," stated Rep. Dixon. "It is part of a much larger effort within the Springfield community to address the needs of children who have been abused, one in which I have been proud to participate. This bill is a step forward as we continue to ensure the safety and well-being of Missouri's children."

The Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights will ensure that a child testifying in a judicial proceeding has the right to:

- Understand the oath being administered;
- Testify at a time of day when the child is best able to understand the questions and otherwise handle the stresses of testifying;
- A comfort item, such as a teddy bear or doll;
- The presence of a support person;
- Be questioned in a manner that is neither intimidating or frightening; and
- Be comfortable when testifying, with the court making reasonable accommodations to ensure the child's comfort.

Next, the House of Representatives as a whole will consider and vote on House Bill 1611 before it moves to the Senate.

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