



# NEWS

From the Office of Representative  
Bob Dixon

140<sup>th</sup> District

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
April 3, 2008

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

## **Missouri House Adopts Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights** *Dixon's House Bill 1611 Heads to Senate*

**Jefferson City, MO** — On Wednesday, by a vote of 100 to 48, the Missouri House gave final approval to House Bill 1611, establishing a Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights. The bill, sponsored by Representative Bob Dixon (R-Springfield), sought to minimize the emotional and psychological trauma to children who are called to testify in court. It was prompted by a 2007 conference on child abuse, where child welfare advocate Victor Vieth spoke and challenged attendees to eliminate child abuse in three generations, and by the efforts of local Springfield groups to address child abuse and neglect in the region.

"The Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights rests on the fact that children are not adults, and should not be treated as adults," stated Rep. Dixon. "We're looking for a fair environment where the children can tell the judge and jury what happened to them."

In order to prevent a child witness' stress from impacting their testimony, House Bill 1611 affords seven rights to them, including the rights to a court-approved comfort item or support person, the right to be questioned in a developmentally appropriate manner, and the right to be questioned in a manner that is neither intimidating nor frightening.

The Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights now moves to the Senate for consideration.

###