



## MISSOURI SENATE

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# Sen. Rob Mayer Announces Signing of Legislation Protecting Missouri Children

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JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, today announced that legislation improving the safety of Missouri children has been signed into law by Gov. Matt Blunt. Senate Bill 420, sponsored by Mayer, implements protections for children against sexual offenders.

“The children of Missouri are our state’s most valuable resource,” Mayer said. “This legislation will ensure that no child will be forced to live in an unsafe environment.”

Under SB 420, Missouri courts are not permitted to return children to homes in which the parents have been convicted of certain sexual offenses against children. The Child Support Division may also exercise discretion when placing a child in a home with a parent or resident who has been found guilty of similar offenses in another state. These provisions ensure that Missouri children will not be reunited with the very people who have abused them or other children and sent them into the custody of the state.

SB 420 contains a variety of other modifications to criminal law. Among the measures, SB 420:

- Expands the Safe Place for Newborns Act, which allows mothers to avoid abortion by relinquishing custody of their newborns to safe havens, such as hospitals and law enforcement agencies.
- Creates a task force to draft a plan for alternative prison sentences for nonviolent offenders in order to slow the growth of Missouri’s overburdened state prisons.

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- Allows cities and counties to adopt fees on marriage licenses and civil cases that would help support domestic violence shelters.
- Clarifies how deed-owners designate beneficiaries.

“These measures will protect our children against sexual predators, provide further alternatives to abortion and ease the burden on Missouri prisons,” Mayer said. “By making Missouri safer and more efficient, we have taken yet another step toward a better future for all of the citizens of this state.”

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*Senator Robert Mayer represents the people of Wayne, Ripley, Butler, Stoddard, New Madrid, Pemiscot and Dunklin counties in the Missouri Senate.*