



MISSOURI SENATE

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Sen. Rob Mayer Announces Signing of Bill to Protect Victims of False Allegations

JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, today announced that legislation to heal the reputations of individuals falsely accused of child abuse has been signed into law by Gov. Matt Blunt. Senate Bill 155, which Mayer sponsored, allows the Division of Family Services to destroy identifying information of people who have been wrongly charged.

“While the General Assembly has worked to implement laws protecting our children from abuse, it is also necessary to ensure that we do not ruin the lives of people who have been subject to false and malicious allegations,” Mayer said. “Senate Bill 155 guarantees that while the Division of Family Services makes complete investigations, its records will not negatively reflect on individuals who have been found innocent.”

Senate Bill 155 authorizes the Missouri Division of Family Services to expunge identifying information from reports that falsely charge individuals with sexual abuse of minors. After the division has completed an investigation and has found no evidence to support the accusation, all information from the report identifying the accused will be destroyed after a certain period of time.

Information identifying people who are themselves required by law to report possible abuses against children, such as teachers, law enforcement agents and physicians, who are known as “mandatory reporters,” will be dropped after 45 days. When false allegations have been made by mandatory reporters, identifying information will be expunged after five years. For other investigation reports with insufficient evidence, identifying information will be dropped after two years. At the end of the given time period, the identifying information shall be removed from the records of the division and destroyed.

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“These measures will strike a balance between stringent investigations of alleged abuse and proper resolutions when allegations have been found to be false,” Mayer said. “We want to help victims, not help create them.”

Another measure in the legislation states that if a minor is found to have abused another child, the minor cannot return to or reside in any residence within 1,000 feet from the home of the abused child. The abusing minor is also prohibited from going to any child-care facility or school at which the abused child attends. This provision protects victims from further abuses.

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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.*