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JEFFERSON CITY

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## **Sen. Chris Koster Introduces Bill to Protect Men from False Paternity**

JEFFERSON CITY — Sen. Chris Koster (D-Harrisonville) last week introduced [Senate Bill 1147](#), an initiative that closes a loophole in the current law that requires a man to accept paternity and pay child support, even if he can prove the child is not his biological child.

Under present Missouri law, a married man is presumed to be the father of a child simply because he was married to the mother at the time of the birth. Divorced and unmarried men are given time frames to contest paternal status. However, after the deadlines pass, men have little recourse to dispute paternity — DNA tests are not even typically enough to waive financial responsibility of the child.

“The current law turns a blind eye to the reality of the situation and makes justice impossible,” Sen. Koster said. “It’s inconceivable that our courts are forced to completely disregard the facts — especially when they are backed up by irrefutable evidence — because of an outdated statute.”

Senate Bill 1147 protects men, regardless of marital status, who find out they are not the father of their child after ending a relationship with the child’s mother by allowing them to challenge paternity and bring forward new evidence (such as a DNA test) at any time. If the test indicates a 99 percent or greater probability that the petitioner is not the child’s father, the man is relieved from responsibility and is no longer obligated to pay child support to the mother.

“It can take years before some men realize they are not the biological father of the child,” Sen. Koster said. “Arbitrary deadlines should not exist for something as important as determining a child’s father, or for that matter, a father knowing the truth about his biological relationship with the child.”

Sen. Koster’s initiative has been referred to the Pensions, Veterans’ Affairs and General Laws Committee for further consideration. Committee approval returns the bill to the Senate for debate by the full body.

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