***This Week in the Missouri Senate* Script: SB 160**

This week in the Missouri Senate, we review a new law aimed at improving foster families…

**Nat Snd / Runs :05 / OC: Senate Bill 160.**

*“For the record, Sen. David Sater of the 29th [Senatorial] District, and I bring to you today Senate Bill 160….”*

[Senate Bill 160](http://www.senate.mo.gov/17info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=57095315) modifies provisions relating to child protection. The proposal was given Missouri Senate approval on March 30, truly agreed to and finally passed on May 8, signed by the executive branch on June 22 and became law on Aug. 28; although, some portions took effect upon the governor’s signature.

The new law has seven main points:

* The [Joint Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect](http://www.senate.mo.gov/jccn/);
* Definitions of child abuse and neglect;
* Records of child abuse and neglect;
* The [Foster Care Bill of Rights](https://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/cwmanual/section1/ch3/sec1ch3attacha.htm);
* Foster care kinship placements;
* Juvenile court proceedings; and
* The presence of certain offenders in public places.

When Senate Bill 160 was first heard in the [Missouri Senate Seniors, Families and Children Committee](http://www.senate.mo.gov/SFCH/) on Feb. 1, sponsor — Sen. David Sater of Cassville — said the key provision was the Foster Care Bill of Rights…

**Sater 1 / Runs :21 / OC: in their office.**

*“And also provides that every foster child and foster parent would receive orientation and explanation of what the Foster Care Bill of Rights is. This bill would say that every* [*Children’s Division*](https://dss.mo.gov/cd/) *office, residential care facility, a child-placing agency or other agency involved in the care and placement of foster children would have to post the [Foster Care] Bill of Rights in their office.”*

During committee discussion, Sen. Jeanie Riddle of Callaway County told the sponsor she believes this to be more of a beginning than a stand-alone law…

**Riddle 2 / Runs :28 / OC: of the child.**

*“I don’t think that we are close to being there to take care of these children that seem like their voices are lost in the quagmire of bureaucracy. But, that’s my concern, is recognizing the importance of familial stability in foster care and adoption placement. It shall be the practice of the Children’s Division to support the reunification of a child with the child’s parents or legal guardian,* and *when the Children’s Division determines that doing so is in the best interest of the child.”*

When the measure was talked about on the Missouri Senate floor on March 29, Sen. Jill Schupp of Creve Coeur mentioned she likes what the new law will do…

**Schupp 3 / Runs :21 / OC: I appreciate that.**

*“I just wanted to compliment you. I just read through the changes in the bill. I think it makes it even better, and I have supported it originally in committee. By trying to encourage that siblings are going to be able to live together, if that’s possible, is a huge step forward to keep as much of a family intact as possible. So, congratulations on making a decent bill a better bill. I appreciate that.”*

Next up for lawmakers will be assigning numbers to prefiled legislation, which will happen on Dec. 1.

The Second Regular Session of the 99th General Assembly will start at noon on Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2018.

And, remember, you can follow these and other issues facing the Missouri Senate by visiting our website: [senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov).

Reporting from the State Capitol, I’m Dean Morgan.