

HB 1611 -- Children's Bill of Courtroom Rights

Sponsor: Dixon

This bill establishes a children's bill of courtroom rights that applies to all children testifying in court. In its main provisions, the bill:

- (1) Assures a child the right to understand the oath administered in court and requires the court to present the oath in a developmentally appropriate manner;
- (2) Grants the child the right to understand all questions asked of him or her;
- (3) Requires the court to allow the child to testify at a time of day when the child is best able to understand the questions asked of him or her;
- (4) Grants the child the right to have a comfort item, such as a blanket or stuffed animal, when testifying;
- (5) Grants the child the right to have a support person present during his or her testimony;
- (6) Requires that the child is questioned in a manner that is neither intimidating nor frightening which includes disallowing any attorney from raising his or her voice while questioning the child or making an argument; and
- (7) Grants the child the right to be comfortable when testifying.