

House Bill 480 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Ballinger of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Caldwell of the 131<sup>st</sup>, Pak of the 108<sup>th</sup>, Sheldon of the 104<sup>th</sup>, Abrams of the 89<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 17-8-54 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
2 persons allowed to be present in a courtroom when a person under the age of 16 testifies  
3 concerning a sex offense, so as to add victim assistance personnel to the list of persons who  
4 may be present in a courtroom when a person under the age of 16 testifies concerning a sex  
5 offense; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Code Section 17-8-54 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to persons allowed  
9 to be present in a courtroom when a person under the age of 16 testifies concerning a sex  
10 offense, is amended as follows:

11 "17-8-54.

12 In the trial of any criminal case, when any person under the age of 16 is testifying  
13 concerning any ~~sex~~ sexual offense, the court shall clear the courtroom of all persons except  
14 parties to the cause and their immediate families or guardians, attorneys and their  
15 secretaries, officers of the court, victim assistance coordinators, victims' advocates, and  
16 such other victim assistance personnel as provided for by Code Section 15-18-14.2, jurors,  
17 newspaper reporters or broadcasters, and court reporters."

18 **SECTION 2.**

19 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.