



MISSOURI SENATE
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Missouri Senate Cracks Down on Sexual Predators

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate’s Judiciary Committee this week passed legislation cracking down on sexual predators who target children. Under the bill, pedophiles who are guilty of more than one felony against a minor would be required to wear an electronic tracking device at all times while they are on parole. The proposal by Sen. Matt Bartle (R-Lee’s Summit) came in response to the brutal assault and slaying of Jessica Lunsford from Florida by a sexual offender who failed to register his new address as required by state law.

“There are no words to describe the horror of this crime,” said Sen. Bartle. “Equally brutal attacks on children have occurred in Missouri and such evil demands a response by a civilized society. The legislation passed this week by the Senate Judiciary Committee would allow authorities to track predators who fail to register their addresses. This tool will help prevent these criminals from being able to slip in unnoticed to a new neighborhood and prey on unsuspecting children.”

In the recent case from Florida, 9-year-old Jessica Lunsford was kidnapped from her grandparent’s home during the night. For days, Jessica was held against her will, sexually assaulted and eventually buried alive. When her lifeless body was unearthed by authorities she was found still holding a purple stuffed dolphin, a recent gift from her father.

“One need look no further than the headlines of the newspaper for proof that our world is marred by stark, unadulterated evil in the form of child predators,” said Bartle. “In addition to this year’s provision requiring pedophiles to wear tracking devices, I will be filing legislation next year to guarantee that repeat child sex offenders will spend the rest of their lives locked away in a Missouri state prison. Statistics show that pedophiles are seldom cured so they must be put in a place they can never again brutalize and terrorize a child.”

On a related note, this week the Missouri Supreme Court struck down part of Missouri’s law that protected children from sexual misconduct by adults. In the case, the court overturned the sentence of a man who had been convicted of sexual misconduct charges involving children. While the facts of the particular case before the court are disputed, the court took the remarkable step of striking down the underlying law on a technicality.

Yesterday, April 28, Sen. Bartle added language to a crime bill to plug the hole created by the court. The legislation has an “emergency clause” and will become effective as soon as it is signed by the governor rather than in late August like most newly passed bills.

“The legislature cannot afford to stand by and allow pedophiles to take advantage of a court-created loophole in our law,” said Bartle.

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