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that is morally wrong.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

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Sen. Norma Champion's Sex Offender Registration Bill Awaits Governor's Approval

JEFFERSON CITY—Having received final approval from both chambers of the General Assembly, a bill allowing county law enforcement agencies to place pictures of registered sexual offenders on the county Web site is awaiting the governor's signature.

Senate Bill 73, which is sponsored by Sen. Norma Champion, R-Springfield, allows chief county law enforcement officers to maintain sites similar to the state highway patrol's Registered Sex Offender Web site, which publishes the names, last-known addresses, photographs and criminal convictions of the offenders.

"This legislation is very timely in light of the recent murders of children in Florida by registered sex offenders," Champion said. "If more people had access to information on who is a known sexual predator, we could prevent some of these devastating tragedies from happening."

Champion's measure stemmed from legal confusion on whether county Web sites can post pictures of sex offenders. Photographs are not considered public record, but this bill makes an exception in the case of registered sex offenders.

"In the name of protecting our children from falling victim to sexual abusers, this bill ensures that lawsuits cannot be brought against counties for posting pertinent identification information on their sites," Champion said. "Because sex offenders are known to be repeat offenders, pictures are one of the best ways to identify these potentially dangerous people.

The legislation was passed unanimously by the Senate in February, and received identical support this week in the House, where it was handled by Rep. Ray Weter, R-Nixa. The governor is expected to soon sign the bill into law.