



MISSOURI SENATE

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John Loudon
7th Senate District

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Sen. Loudon Announces Online Predators Grant Proposal

SPRINGFIELD— Sen. John Loudon, R-Chesterfield, today announced he is introducing a proposal to create and train a task force charged with baiting and capturing online sexual predators in Missouri. The proposal was outlined at a press conference in Springfield.

“This bill is long overdue,” Loudon said. “For too long, people have tried to pretend that this problem does not exist. The fact is that 20 percent of children ages 10 to 17 have received unwanted sexual solicitation online. We have to find ways to stop this dangerous exploitation.”

Loudon’s proposal calls for the creation of a program to distribute grants to Internet law-enforcement task forces and other law-enforcement agencies within the Missouri Department of Public Safety. The grants will be used to train and keep on staff specialized detectives and computer forensic personnel whose focus will be to investigate Internet sex crimes against children, including enticement of a child and possession or promotion of child pornography.

An eight-member panel will oversee the establishment and funding of the program, which must first be approved by the House and Senate appropriations committees. Loudon said his staff will work to procure \$3 to 5 million for the newly created program. State Rep. Bob Dixon, R-Springfield, is introducing similar legislation in the House.

“The growth of the Internet as a tool to exploit our children has to be addressed by state law enforcement,” Loudon said. “The educational benefits of this technology are clearly balanced by the dangers it presents to our children.”

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Loudon has pointed out troubling statistics displaying the growth of online sexual predators. A report by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children states that of all children ages 10 to 17:

- 1 in 5 received an unwanted online sexual solicitation
- 1 in 4 were exposed to unwanted online nudity
- 1 in 17 reported online harassment
- 1 in 33 reported receiving an aggressive online sexual solicitation

“The statistics are disturbing,” Loudon said. “But we are not helpless against these vile criminals. We have to be able to take the fight to them if we want our children to be protected.”

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