



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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John Loudon
7th Senate District

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Sen. John Loudon Details Child Safety Initiative

Measure Creates Task Force to Shut Down Online Pedophiles

ST. LOUIS — Sen. John Loudon, R-Chesterfield, today held a press conference in St. Louis detailing his proposal creating and training a law-enforcement task force designed to lure and capture online sexual predators in Missouri. The press briefing was held at the Kathy J. Weinman Children's Advocacy Centre at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

“There is a clear and present need for this child-protection initiative,” Loudon said. “An alarming one out of five children between ages 10 and 17 have been subjected to unwanted, unwarranted and unacceptable online solicitations. No longer can this issue be kept in the background; now at the forefront is the protection of our children from malicious deviants.”

Loudon's proposal calls for the creation of a program to distribute grants to Internet-centered law-enforcement task forces and other law-enforcement agencies within the Missouri Department of Public Safety. Grant funds will help train and retain detectives and computer forensic specialists whose focus will be to investigate Internet sex crimes against children, including child enticement and of child pornography possession/promotion.

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 is working to make \$3 million to \$5 million available for the newly created program. State Rep. Bob Dixon, R-Springfield, is advancing similar legislation in the House.

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“The growth of the Internet in general has spawned the growth of Internet-based crimes, the exploitation of children being chief among these evil acts,” Loudon said. “Law enforcement needs the backing and the tools to eradicate this scourge and my legislation enables this support.”

Loudon points to 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 children received unwanted online sexual solicitations.
- 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 a disturbing and pressing call to action,” Loudon said. “We have to be able to take the fight to these miscreants to protect our children.”

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