



THE LOUDON TIMES

Senator John Loudon
Senate District 7

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Cracking Down on Sexual Predators and Investing in Education

With the legislative session in its final days, lawmakers last week approved legislation protecting Missouri children from sexual abuse and investing in Missouri's colleges and universities.

Companion legislation in the House strengthens state laws against sex offenders; lawmakers also approved funding I have worked to procure that will be used to go after Internet sexual predators.

The Legislature earlier this week approved House Bill 1008, which contains an amendment I proposed providing an initial \$250,000 for investigating Internet sexual predators and child pornographers. The \$250,000 in funding will be used for grants to local law enforcement agencies for Internet sex crimes task forces. Funding will be issued by the Missouri Department of Public Safety to hire and train online detectives and computer forensic personnel to go after child pornographers and sexual predators who use the Internet to lure children.

As more and more individuals are using the Internet, the threat to children from sexual predators continues to increase. There even have been reports of "child molester chat rooms," where child predators share information on how to lure and seduce children.

I am pleased to see the \$250,000 appropriation, but this is just a start. Ultimately, I would like to see \$3 million in funding to hire more online detectives to work to stop these sick criminals from preying on our children.



Sen. John Loudon with students from West Christian School and Bellerive School.

After the House approved legislation to reduce voter fraud, members of the House and Senate have been appointed to come to a final agreement on the legislation.

The Voter Protection Act, SB 1014, works to eliminate voter fraud by requiring Missourians to show their driver's licenses or other government-issued photo identification in order to vote. The legislation also works to reduce voter intimidation by increasing the distance that must be kept from the voting booth by those distributing campaign literature, posting signs or polling voters. SB 1014 also requires the state to issue photo IDs to all citizens unable to obtain them for financial reasons and exempts from the photo-ID requirement some voters with disabilities and individuals born before 1941.

By decreasing voter fraud in Missouri, we can ensure that illegally cast ballots do not water down the legitimate votes of those who have exercised a fundamental democratic right.

If you have questions or comments about these issues or any other topic, please call my Capitol office at (573) 751-9763. Thank you for your support.

Quote of The Week

Freedom is fragile and must be protected. To sacrifice it, even as a temporary measure, is to betray it.

Germaine Greer