



*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bill Increasing Penalties for Sex Offenders Sent to Governor

Bill Stems from "Jessica's Law" and Creates a Child-Safe Internet

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate today unanimously approved and sent to the governor a comprehensive bill that creates mandatory sentences for violent child sexual offenders and improves prevention measures including creating a Child-Safe Internet.

The measure, House Bill 1698, creates a 30 year minimum prison sentence for anyone who commits forcible rape or sodomy against a child less than 12 years old. Sen. Matt Bartle, R-Lee's Summit, said mandatory sentences are needed to keep sexual predators from being repeat offenders.

“With mandatory sentences for the most heinous and violent offenders we can make sure they will never harm another child again,” Bartle said. “This bill also makes sure that if these offenders are ever released they will undergo lifetime monitoring using electronic bracelets.”

Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, said prevention is also an important key in protecting Missouri children from sexual offenders.

“We want to lock the door and throw away the key,” Gibbons said. “But we also want to make sure our kids are never hurt in the first place.”

The bill requires sex offenders to report updated information, including photos, on the state's sex offender registry. Law enforcement agencies can also publish the sex offender registry in newspapers to help inform Missourians who do not have access to the Internet.

Sen. John Loudon, R-Chesterfield, included language that creates a grant program to help local law enforcement catch predators trying to lure children on the Internet.

“One in five children are approached on the Internet with unwanted advances,” Loudon said. “Missouri needs more local programs that can help catch these sick people preying on our kids.”

Lawmakers funded the grant program with \$250,000 in the state budget.

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