



MISSOURI SENATE

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Sen. Crowell To Introduce Legislation to Make Missouri Children Safer

JEFFERSON CITY — For the 2007 session, Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, plans to introduce legislation allowing voters to overturn a recent ruling from the Missouri Supreme Court declaring that sex offenders convicted prior to Jan. 1, 1995, do not have to register with the state sex offender registry.

Megan's Law, which went into effect in 1995, requires all convicted sex offenders to register with local sheriff's departments. But due to conflicting language in the Missouri Constitution, the high court ruled that it is unconstitutional to force sex offenders to register if they were convicted before the enactment of Megan's Law. There is no conflict in the federal constitution.

"Even though the court was just doing its job in preventing unconstitutionality, that doesn't mean those who were found guilty before 1995 are any less dangerous to our children," Crowell said. "I want to give Missouri voters the chance to amend the Constitution so those who pose a threat to Missouri families are not allowed to hide under the radar."

The Missouri Constitution is one of only five in the nation that includes wording that essentially protects pre-1995 convicted sex offenders.

"We don't want these sick individuals to seek refuge in the Show-Me State," Crowell said. "That is why it is necessary that we strike the problematic language from our state constitution so Megan's Law remains a comprehensive shield for our children."

Once introduced, the legislation must be approved by the Senate and the House before the constitutional amendment would be put on the November 2008 ballot.

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