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MISSOURI SENATE

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Sen. Crowell Files Constitutional Amendment to Make Missouri Children Safer

JEFFERSON CITY—Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, filed a Senate Joint Resolution that would give voters the power to uphold the original intent of Megan’s Law, which went into effect in 1995, requiring that all convicted sex offenders register with local sheriff’s departments.

Due to conflicting language in the Missouri Constitution, the Missouri Supreme Court, this past summer ruled that it is unconstitutional to force sex offenders to register if they were convicted before the enactment of Megan’s Law. This takes a large number of sexual offenders off of the state registry.

“Regardless of when sex offenders were convicted, the community should be aware of where they are,” Crowell said. “I want to give Missouri voters the chance to amend the constitution so that Missouri is not a safe harbor for those who harmed children before 1995.”

Upon voter approval, SJR 9 would allow Megan’s Law to be applied retrospectively. The Missouri Constitution is one of only five in the nation that includes wording that essentially protects pre-1995 convicted sex offenders.

“Missourians do not want sexual predators to seek refuge in the Show-Me State because a loophole in our Constitution protects their identity and whereabouts,” Crowell said. “It’s our children who deserve that protection, so I expect strong support for ensuring that Megan’s Law remains a comprehensive shield for the innocent.”

The First Regular Session of the 94th General Assembly convenes on Jan. 3, 2006.

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