



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Delbert Scott
28th Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 221
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Weekly Column for the
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**Contact: Debbie Poire
(573) 751-8793**

Amber Alert System

JEFFERSON CITY – This week Governor Blunt signed into law a comprehensive bill which increases penalties for sex offenders. The legislation is modeled after “Jessica’s Law,” named for 9-year-old Jessica Lunsford, a Florida girl who was taken from her bedroom by a registered sex offender who later raped and killed her.

The measure creates a 30-year minimum prison sentence for anyone who commits forcible rape or sodomy against a child younger than 12 years old, requires sex offenders to report updated information on the state’s sex offender registry and creates a program to help law enforcement agencies catch predators trying to lure in children via the Internet.

The legislation also modifies the state’s Amber Alert System, which aids in the identification and location of abducted children.

Senate Bill 30, signed into law in 2003, created the Amber Alert System in Missouri. The system was established as a legacy to 9-year-old Amber Hagerman, who was kidnapped while riding her bicycle in Texas. The system notifies the public through local radio and television stations when a child is believed to have been abducted.

The measure signed into law by the governor this week clarifies that the system deals with missing children rather than adults. An abducted child is defined as someone 17 years of age or younger who is reasonably believed by law enforcement to be the victim of kidnapping. If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.mo.gov.