



# MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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## St. Louis Area Law Enforcement Gets Funds to Shut Down Cyber Predators

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### *Sen. Loudon Applauds Effort to Stop the “Worst of the Worst”*

JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. John Loudon, R-Chesterfield, is applauding Governor Blunt’s approval of money to fund the Cyber Crime Grant Program – a \$1.25 million program that gives law enforcement the tools to go after Internet predators and child pornographers. In particular in the St. Louis area, the Maryland Heights Police Department, the sheriffs’ departments for St. Louis County and St. Charles County, and the Regional Computer Crimes Education Enforcement Group in Clayton will get grants to fund their efforts to stop those who prey on children through the Internet.

“These are the worst of the worst,” said Loudon. “Internet predators pose a terrible danger to the innocent children who try to use the web. For too long we have underestimated how vicious, depraved, and cruel child pornographers are. Children as young as infants have been raped or sodomized. Some have been tortured or forced to engage in bestiality. And there has been a correlation, as high as 80 percent, between people who possess child pornography and child molestation itself.”

“I am grateful the Governor has signed this important funding legislation. With this money, law enforcement agencies will be able to hire more detectives to go after predators and child pornographers. The new law also stops children from being further victimized, prevents new victims, saves families much anguish and even saves lives.”

There have been more than 61,000 cases of Internet child pornography in Missouri. Glendale Police Lt. Joe Laramie, Missouri’s ICAC coordinator has cited a survey that found 87 percent of those who possess child pornography have pictures of children between the ages of 6 and 12, 43 percent between ages 3 and 5 and 20 percent under age 3.

Under the program, the Regional Computer Crimes Education Enforcement Group in Clayton will get \$176,232; the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Department receives \$87,849; the St. Charles County

Sheriff's Department gets \$125,170, and the City of Maryland Heights Police Department will receive \$44,986.

Under the bill, the money from the grant program goes from just \$250,000 this year to more than \$1.25 million for the coming fiscal year. Multi-jurisdictional and local law enforcement units could get the grant monies to hire and train online detectives and computer forensic experts. Law enforcement would then have the people and the tools to set up operations, such as stings, to catch these suspected criminals.

“We have stepped up to our responsibility to protect the youngest, most vulnerable citizens of this state from those who would troll the Internet hoping to snare our children and receive some perverse gratification from their exploitation,” said Loudon. “Those who even consider committing this kind of crime in Missouri are fully warned that we are serious, have the means, and have the will to stop them in their tracks.”

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