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MISSOURI SENATE

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Sen. Jason Crowell's Initiative to Expand Sex Offender Registry Moves to House

JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, recently announced that his measure to allow retrospective application of Missouri's sex offender registry has moved to the House. Upon voter approval, Senate Joint Resolution 34 would require the sex offenders to register even if the offenses were committed before the registry's 1995 enactment.

In 1995, Meghan's Law went into effect in Missouri. The legislation requires all convicted sex offenders to register with their local sheriff department. However, in June 2006, Missouri's Supreme Court ruled that sex offenders convicted of crimes before 1995 cannot be required to register because of the state constitution's prohibition on retrospective laws.

"There are more 4,300 sex offenders that would have to be added to the state registry if the voters approve this measure," said Sen. Crowell. "That's 4,300 people who have committed a sexual offense that are living in our state right now — next-door to children, near playgrounds, and by schools or daycares — that neighbors aren't aware of."

Sen. Crowell's SJR 34 has received bipartisan support in the Senate and is now in the House. The legislation would allow voters to approve an exception to the prohibition against retrospective laws. This would include any sex offender registry laws, laws restricting sex offenders from residing within a certain distance of a school or child-care facility, and laws requiring felons to have a biological sample collected for purposes of DNA analysis.

"Just because these offenders committed their offense before 1995 does not mean they are any less dangerous than the offenders who committed offenses afterwards," said Sen. Crowell. "This resolution would narrowly alter our constitution to protect the security and safety of Missourians."

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