



April 10, 2008

Capital Punishment for Child Rapists

Last week I told you about efforts to increase the efficiency of our judicial system, require English to be spoken on exams for Missouri commercial driver's licenses, and improve transparency and accountability in our state government. I also mentioned that the Senate passed a bill on comprehensive immigration reform, which I will more fully explain in my next report.

I was profoundly saddened to hear of the seven-year-old Springfield girl who was kidnapped, brutally raped and left for dead in a burning house earlier this week by a man who reportedly has 10 prior convictions. This situation strengthens my commitment to pass [Senate Bill 1194](#), which I filed back in February to make forcible rape of a child under 12 punishable by death or life in prison without the possibility of parole.

To forcibly rape or sodomize a child is one of the most morally reprehensible crimes imaginable, and our state should recognize the value of each child by making this crime punishable by death or life in prison without parole. A criminal who forcibly rapes or forcibly sodomizes a child younger than twelve years old vilely dehumanizes his innocent, young victim, causing damage from which most victims never recover. These criminals should receive the most serious punishment available.

Child rapists have shown by their crime that they do not care about the consequences of their actions. Criminals rarely think about the punishment they will receive for their crime, even when the death penalty is on the table. Rather, they count on not being caught. Those who forcibly rape children prove this to be true by preying on unsuspecting victims who are least able to defend themselves and who are least likely to tell anyone about their traumatic experience. We must give prosecutors the option of pursuing the death penalty for child rapists to stop the victimization of more of Missouri's young children by the most depraved people imaginable. Death or life in prison without the possibility parole will provide 100 percent protection against recidivism by each defendant so sentenced.

My bill was heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee and I hope to move it to the Senate floor. I hope that tough legislation such as SB 1194 will send the message that Missourians are serious about protecting our kids.

I extend my most sincere gratitude to the prosecutors and law enforcement officials in Springfield who are working on this recent case, as well as all law enforcement officers who regularly deal with heinous crimes such as these. I also commend them for quickly identifying and apprehending the alleged perpetrator in this case.

As always, I welcome your ideas, questions and concerns about Missouri government. You may contact me at the Capitol as follows: (573) 751-2234, jack.goodman@senate.mo.gov or by writing to Senator Jack Goodman, Missouri State Capitol, Room 331, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

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