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Sen. Jason Crowell Praises Missouri Supreme Court's Retrospective Sex Offender Registry Ruling

JEFFERSON CITY — Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, today commended the Missouri Supreme Court on yesterday's (6/16) ruling that all sex offenders must register with the state, regardless if their offense occurred before the registry laws took effect.

The state's highest court found that the sex offender registry—which was established in 1995 in accordance with federal law and expanded in 1996 under Megan's Law to include a community notification system—must include all offenders living in Missouri. Because of the Missouri Constitution's ban on laws that are retrospective in nature, the Missouri Supreme Court had previously ruled in 2006 that it is unconstitutional to force sex offenders to register if they were convicted before the registry laws took effect in 1995. This left a large number of sexual offenders off the state registry, including nearly 150 offenders in Southeast Missouri.

A 2006 federal law that requires all sex offenders to register in their home states was the basis for yesterday's ruling. The judges unanimously decided that the law applies in Missouri, superseding the state's constitutional provision that essentially protected pre-1995 offenders from registering.

"I applaud the Supreme Court for affirming the hard work and determination of lawmakers who have been pushing for retrospective sex offender registry laws for the past few years," Sen. Crowell said. "Yesterday's ruling was a victory for anyone concerned with protecting Missouri's children from sexual predators."

As he has in previous sessions, Sen. Crowell sponsored a bill that would have put the issue before Missourians. [Senate Joint Resolution 3](#) would have allowed sex offender registry laws to be applied retrospectively, if approved by voters.

"This ruling is what we ultimately wanted SJR 3 and the other similar bills filed in previous years to accomplish," Sen. Crowell said. "When it comes to sexual offenses, especially against children, 'when' a crime is committed seems irrelevant for the purposes of registry laws. What matters is that these sex offenders *were* convicted and the community deserves to know who and where they are."

Missouri's sexual offender registry is open to the public and available through the Missouri State Highway Patrol. The list provides name, alias names, date of birth, alias dates of birth, physical description, addresses, offense, vehicle information, picture and offense dates for registered sex offenders.

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