



NEWS

From the Office of Representative
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140th District

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2004 Missouri Legislation Avoids Pitfalls of Georgia Law

Law Preventing Sexual Offenders From Living Near Schools Will Stand Up to Court Challenges

Springfield, MO — Rep. Bob Dixon, Springfield, addressed a recent Georgia high court ruling on that state's law imposing residency limitations on registered sex offenders.

"I have taken a keen interest in how these sexual offender laws have been treated in other states," said Rep. Dixon from his Springfield office. "However, this Georgia ruling will have no impact on similar legislation I sponsored and passed in the Missouri General Assembly."

The Georgia Supreme Court overturned a law prohibiting registered sex offenders from living within 1,000 feet of schools or daycares. The Georgia law went further than those enacted in many states, including Missouri, by adding bus stops and making no exceptions for offenders who already lived at the location in question.

In 2004, Missouri's law was criticized because it allowed sex offenders who already lived within 1,000 feet of a school to stay there, without being required to move.

"The 2004 law prevented sexual predators from establishing new residency near schools and daycares," stated Rep. Dixon. "We anticipated it would be found unconstitutional if it were made retroactive. In light of this court decision, the 2004 legislation was the right way to go, and will help to make Missouri school children safer from sexual offenders."

According to Missouri State Highway Patrol statistics, between 2004 and 2006, twelve sex offenders were prosecuted and found guilty for the violation of living within 1,000 feet of a school.

"This law is just one tool to help protect kids from sexual abuse; it cannot stand alone. Ultimately, parents, law enforcement and communities must work together to protect kids," said Dixon.

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