

## **Dec-27-07 Governor Codey Signs Legislation Making New Jersey a Leader in Cracking Down on Internet Predators**

### **NEWS RELEASE**

Acting Governor Richard J. Codey  
December 27, 2007

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Press Office  
609-777-2600

### **GOVERNOR CODEY SIGNS LEGISLATION MAKING NEW JERSEY A LEADER IN CRACKING DOWN ON INTERNET PREDATORS**

**WEST TRENTON** - New Jersey now has a new set of weapons to fight the growing threat of Internet predators, as Governor Richard J. Codey today signed legislation that moves the state to the forefront in combating individuals who attempt to exploit children online.

"No matter how much you trust your kids, no matter how much you think you know what they're doing, there are some sick people out there that will stop at nothing to prey on them," said Governor Codey. "This legislation will give us some of the toughest tools in the nation to crack down on the growing threat of Internet predators. Hopefully this law will help a lot of parents sleep easier at night."

Signed in the presence of law enforcement officials and other supporters at the State Police Division Headquarters in West Trenton, bill S1979 will provide the state with nearly unparalleled authority to monitor or restrict Internet access by convicted sex offenders, effectively making New Jersey a national leader in the fight to crack down on online sexual predators.

Under bill S1979, anyone convicted of using a computer to help commit a sex offense will be strictly prohibited from using a computer or accessing the Internet, restrictions that could extend for their entire period of parole. The bill will also give the State Parole Board the discretion to impose Internet access restrictions on other sex offenders, regardless of whether they used a computer to facilitate their crime.

These restrictions will require the person to submit to periodic, unannounced examinations of their computer equipment; install hardware or software systems on their computer to monitor their use; inform law enforcement if they have

access to or use of a computer or Internet device; and receive written approval from the state before accessing or using a computer or the Internet.

"As a co-sponsor of 'Megan's Law,' I understand how important it is to protect ourselves and the children of this state from sex offenders," said Senator John Girgenti (D-Bergen/Passaic). "By taking computer and Internet access away from those who use these devices to commit sex crimes, we are reducing the risk of them being tempted to be a repeat offender."

Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein (D-Middlesex/Mercer), the bill's primary sponsor in the Assembly, emphasized the importance of this legislation and noted that currently there are no federal laws requiring the imposition of Internet restrictions on sex offenders. Only two other states - Florida and Nevada - have any such restrictions. Through passage of this bill, Greenstein said, New Jersey residents now have a greater safety net because the provisions cover a broader group of offenders and include more stringent guidelines for monitoring their computer use.

"When Megan's Law was enacted, few could even envision a day when a sex offender hiding behind a fake screen name would be a mouse-click away from new and unwitting victims," said Assemblywoman Greenstein. "Sex offenders cannot be given an opportunity to abuse the anonymity the Internet can provide as a means of opening a door to countless new potential victims."

The other primary sponsors in the Assembly echoed that sentiment.

"Megan's Law must keep pace with changing times and emerging technology," said Assemblywoman Joan Voss (D-Bergen). "Now, law enforcement will be able to remain a step ahead of an offender looking to strike again."

"Allowing Megan's Law to remain on the books blind to the realities of the Internet age would be detrimental to our over-arching goal of protecting our children," said Assemblyman Louis Manzo (D-Hudson).