

House Republican Press Release

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Reps Hamzy, Burns: Jessica's Law Sends Zero Tolerance Message to Child Sex Predators; Internet Stalkers



Legislation Sets Stiff Mandatory Sentences for Sexual Assaults on Minors; Child Pornography Possession

When Connecticut's version of Jessica's law gained final legislative approval in the State House Saturday, it sent a 'zero tolerance' message to sexual offenders who target children, use the internet to stalk minors under 13, or possess child pornography, state Representatives William A. Hamzy and Ron Burns said after the vote.

"Bristol and Plymouth residents and citizens throughout our state are fed up with revolving door justice for society's most vicious criminals – the ones who prey on our children," said Representative Hamzy, R-78th District, a Deputy House Republican Leader. "Today, the State House responded to that outcry by passing Jessica's Law, which significantly increases the penalties for sexual assaults on children, on internet stalkers, and for possession of child pornography. It will be a strong deterrent to those who would commit heinous crimes against children and keep those convicted of such crimes behind bars for a very long time."

"Nothing horrifies parents more than the possibility of their children becoming sexual assault victims. The legislation we passed today will help prevent crimes against children like Jessica Lunsford in Florida from happening here. Jessica was only nine-years old when she was abducted, raped and murdered in 2005 by a sexual predator with prior convictions for sex crimes against children," said Representative Burns, R-77th District. "This new law will provide another layer of protection for our children. It sends a strong message to sex offenders in Connecticut: assault our children once and go to jail for 25 years; repeat your crime and go back for another 50."

The measure establishes the crime of aggravated sexual assault, which targets individuals who commit certain crimes against a child under age 13 and:

- kidnap, illegally restrain, stalk, disfigure, cause serious injury to, or use violence against the victim;
- commit the same offense against more than one victim under age 13;
- do not know the victim; or
- have been previously convicted of a violent sexual assault.

Under the legislation, aggravated sexual assault of a minor is a Class A felony, punishable by 25 to 50 years in prison, a fine of up to \$ 20,000, or both. For first

offenders, the mandatory minimum prison term is 25 years. For subsequent offenders, it is 50 years.

The measure also imposes mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment for enticing a child under age 13 (Class B Felony, punishable by 1-20 years in prison, a fine of up to \$ 15,000, or both. The sentence includes a 5-year mandatory minimum sentence for a first offense and a 10-year mandatory minimum for each subsequent offense), having sexual or indecent contact with a child under age 13 (mandatory minimum term of 5 years), employing a minor in an obscene performance (mandatory minimum term of 10 years), and importing (mandatory minimum term of 5 years) or possessing (mandatory minimum terms of 1 to 5 years) child pornography.

The legislation, which was sent to Governor Rell to be signed into law, takes effect July 1, 2007.