

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **GOV. RELL SIGNS LEGISLATION TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL PREDATORS**



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#### *Legislation Co-Authored by Rep. O'Neill*

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HARTFORD – Governor M. Jodi Rell today signed legislation into law co-authored by State Rep. Arthur J. O'Neill, R-Southbury, that will impose strict penalties on sexual predators. Components of Public Act 07-143, An Act Concerning Jessica's Law, are currently in effect and additional components take effect on October 1, 2007.

Jessica's Law is named for Jessica Lunsford, a nine-year-old Florida girl who was abducted and killed in February of 2005 by a convicted sex offender. The legislation imposes severe mandatory minimum prison sentences for first and second offenses involving juveniles and is designed to serve as an effective deterrent against committing such crimes.

“As recent events have sadly shown, some criminals are so dangerous that they must be separated from society for as long as possible; this new law, which initially faced strong opposition from some state government officials and was finally passed only after intense negotiations, should become a model for renewed efforts to protect the citizens of Connecticut,” said Rep. O'Neill, who helped craft the legislation as Ranking Member (House Republican Leader) of the Legislature's Judiciary Committee.

Under PA 07-143, the first conviction for sexual assault of a minor under age 13 in which the victim is kidnapped, restrained, stalked, involves violence, physical injury or more than 1 victim would carry a 25 year mandatory minimum sentence. Conviction for a second offense would result in a 50 year mandatory minimum sentence.

The legislation would also strengthen penalties related to child pornography. Specifically, it would establish a five year mandatory minimum for convictions of importing child porn with intent to promote or possessing 50 or more visual depictions of child pornography. It would also establish a mandatory minimum sentence of two years for convictions of possessing 20 or more visual depictions of child pornography and a mandatory minimum sentence of 1 year for convictions of possessing fewer than 20 visual depictions of child pornography.



*On Tuesday, July 31, Gov. M. Jodi Rell speaks to the media regarding her signing Public Act 07-143 into law. State Rep. Arthur O'Neill, R-Southbury, (third from left), coauthored the legislation, which imposes strict penalties on sexual predators.*