

House Republican Press Release

April 4, 2007

Press Office: 860-240-8700

Klarides & House Republicans Promote Child Safety from School Yard to Cyber Space



HARTFORD- Connecticut children will have more secure schools and greater protection from predators roaming the streets and cyber space under legislative proposals presented by House Republicans.

At a press conference Tuesday afternoon, House Republican Leader Lawrence Cafero, Jr. of Norwalk said child safety enhancement is a central goal of the Republican caucus. “Parents rightfully expect society to do everything it can to protect their children from predatory abusers from the moment they get on the school bus in the morning to when they are browsing cyber space at home,” Cafero said. “We have the technology to make our kids safer, we just need to act on common sense proposals that we want for our children.”

Cafero pointed out that the State of Connecticut’s online Sex Offender Registry has a number of critical shortcomings, making it a less useful resource for concerned parents and citizens. In many instances, photos of registered offenders were not included. Clearer descriptions of the nature of the offense committed requiring registration are not generally available.

“Parents ought to have full and comprehensive data available to them concerning sex offenders,” said Deputy Republican Leader Themis Klarides (R-Derby). “Accurate and clear images should be available that help identify registered sex offenders on the state’s registry web site, as well as the nature of the offense that resulted in the individual being registered as a sex offender. Democrats talked about doing this last year and after all this time nothing has been done and the problem remains.”

The package of bills House Republicans offered would:

- Make schools safer by beefing up security and imposing single entrances for all buildings;
- Double penalties for crimes in designated Child Safety Zones;
- Require school contractors to submit lists of employees for review by local school boards. Only teachers and janitors are currently reviewed;
- Post the “docket” of people convicted of sexual offenses and make it available via the internet, requiring updated compliance with offenders’ addresses and photographs;

- Expand the state's Child Identity System, including giving parents more opportunities to provide local law enforcement agencies critical information about their children;
- Work with Internet providers and other private sector companies to make the web more secure for young people.

Klarides noted that creating a safety zone around schools and playgrounds is sensible, since predators typically lurk in these areas.

This session of the Connecticut General Assembly is scheduled to end at midnight, June 6th, 2007.