

**SB**

**185**

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



## SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI

February 19, 2008

Senator Hollis French, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
State Capitol, Room 417  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator French:

I am writing to request a hearing on Senate Bill 185, "An Act relating to sex offenders and child kidnappers."

Senate Bill 185 will require sex offenders and child kidnappers to register their e-mail addresses, instant messaging addresses and any other internet communication identifiers with the Alaska Department of Public Safety. This legislation will provide parents and law enforcement agencies with an important tool to respond to the growing menace of internet predation.

I intend to request that representatives from law enforcement agencies, the appropriate departments and from legislative legal services be present to answer any questions that may arise. Further, I would like to allow public testimony to be taken statewide by electronic means.

Included with this letter you will find the latest version of this bill, a Sponsor Statement, and other background materials.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Wielechowski".

Senator Bill Wielechowski

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Joint Armed Services Committee

Member  
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Judiciary Committee  
Transportation Committee

Senator\_Bill\_Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us

## SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI

### Senate Bill 185

**"An Act relating to sex offenders and child kidnappers."**

### Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 185 will help prevent online sexual predators from preying on children or anyone else by requiring convicted sex offenders and child kidnappers to register their e-mail addresses, instant messaging addresses and any other internet communication identifiers with the Alaska Department of Public Safety. Currently sex offenders in Alaska must register their home address and place of employment with the Department's publicly searchable online database. This would be another category of information to be added to that database. Requiring sex offenders to register their online identities gives parents, kids, and law enforcement a new and effective weapon to repel internet predators.

In the future, data generated under this bill may be used by internet service providers and internet security firms to prevent children from receiving messages from convicted sex offenders or warn parents of the sender's status. In order for these services to be developed, states must take the first step and make the data available.

The internet will likely never be a completely safe place, and parents need to take an active role in making sure their children use the internet responsibly. SB 185 merely gives us a new tool we can use to help protect our selves and our families.

I encourage you to support this legislation.

STATE OFFICE  
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January 24, 2008

Senator Bill Wielechowski  
Alaska State Senate  
State Capitol  
Juneau AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Wielechowski:

On behalf of the Alaska Peace Officers Association (APOA), I would like to thank you for introducing SB 185, an act relating to sex offenders and child kidnappers.

The APOA State Board's Legislative Committee recently reviewed this proposed legislation and decided to unanimously support this bill.

We thank you for addressing this issue. Please contact the APOA office in Anchorage at 277-0515, if there is anything our organization can do to assist in the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Angella Long  
State President

# AK Senate Bipartisan Working Group

Cowdery Davis Eills Elton French Green Hoffman Huggins Kookesh McGuire Olson Today is Jan. 23rd  
Stedman Stevens  
Thomas Wielechowski



## Alaska State Legislature



### Senator Bill Wielechowski

**Press Release • July 19, 2007**

**CONTACT: [Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us) • Room 115 Capitol Bldg. • (907) 485-2435**

## ***Bill Prefiled for Upcoming Session Would Require Sex Offenders to Register e-mail Addresses***

### **Helps Law Enforcement to Track Predators in Cyberspace**

(ANCHORAGE) – A bill to help prevent online sexual predators from preying on children or anyone else is being prepared by Sen. Bill Wielechowski (D – Anchorage) for the 2008 legislative session. The bill requires convicted sexual offenders and child kidnappers to register their e-mail addresses, instant messaging addresses or any other Internet communication identifiers with the Alaska Department of Public Safety.

“The Internet has become a hunting ground for sex offenders and they’re preying on our children,” said Wielechowski. “Nationwide, one in five children have been sexually solicited online; and Alaska has the highest rate of internet use per capita.”

The legislation also requires the sex offender or child kidnapper to notify the department in writing within five days of any changes to their e-mail address or identifier.

Arizona, Kentucky and Virginia already require sex offenders to register their e-mail addresses and at least a dozen other states are considering similar legislation. The popular networking site MySpace.com is on the record supporting this type of legislation.

Senator Wielechowski has pre-filed this legislation for the upcoming 2008 session.

For more information, contact Senator Wielechowski at (907) 269-0120.

###

- Print Forward this page
- [http://www.aksenate.org/wielechowski/071907\\_pretiled\\_bill\\_sex\\_offender\\_register.pdf](http://www.aksenate.org/wielechowski/071907_pretiled_bill_sex_offender_register.pdf)

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## **SEXUAL PREDATORS RIDE THE INTERNET INTO HOMES ACROSS AMERICA**

**Seattle Post-Intelligencer - May 6, 1997**

**Author: VANESSA HO, P-I Reporter**

When a Federal Way mother posed as a teenager online to catch her son's molester, she also put the spotlight on the problem of sexual predators finding victims on the Internet.

The Internet and online services offer instant access to the world, but authorities say that access has a price: It's an easy way for predators to enter the homes of teens and children, who think nothing of spending hours talking with strangers at their computer keyboards. Through the unreined world of chat rooms, predators lure children with promises of support, money and a new home, experts say. In some cases, they molest them, or exploit them with pornography; in other cases, teens run away to be with them.

"It's a systemic problem, it's very bad, and we in the FBI are taking it very seriously," said Larry Foust, spokesman for the FBI Baltimore division in Maryland, where an Internet-related abduction and murder of a child in 1993 prompted a national investigation into online pedophiles.

Investigators were shocked at how widespread the crimes were, Foust said. "And it was only the tip of the iceberg." So far, the investigation has resulted in 96 arrests for child pornography or for luring a child across state lines for illicit sex. There have been 89 convictions.

Foust said that in one case, two suspects not only lured children through the Internet and then molested them, but also took pictures of them to distribute online.

He said sexual predation on the Internet is worse than on the streets "because you can lock your door and stay inside, and they can still penetrate the sanctity of your house."

Millions of people use the Internet, and most do so with no problems, authorities say. But cases of online crimes serve as a reminders of danger:

In February, a man was arrested in California after communicating with a 13-year-old boy for three months and flying across the country to meet him for a sexual encounter.

In December, a Connecticut man was arrested after talking online with a 13-year-old girl, sending her indecent material and driving 100 miles to meet her for sex.

Last month, a 14-year-old girl from suburban Rochester, N.Y., returned home after disappearing for four months with a 22-year-old Air Force deserter she met in a chat room devoted to vampire fantasies.

In 1995, Daniel Montgomery, a 15-year-old Maple Valley boy, ran away for two weeks to San Francisco to meet someone he met online.

The growing number of cases also illuminates hurdles facing police agencies, which often lack resources and money to investigate online crimes.

"We see that this is a growing problem, and it's something we'll be dealing with more and more," said Casey Johnson, a detective with the King County police Special Assault Unit. "The problem is money and bodies."

In the Federal Way case, the mother, posing as a teenager, received sexually explicit messages from the man and an offer to meet face-to-face and have sex. When the meeting was arranged last month, an undercover police officer arrested him. The man, Otis Fellows, pleaded guilty to a charge of second-degree child molestation, which stemmed from an incident in 1993. He faces sentencing on May 23.

Some online encounters between adults and children have resulted in heartache for parents, such as Kathy Newell of Eugene, Ore.

Last year, her 14-year-old daughter Channa befriended a 24-year-old woodworker in a chat room. A shaggy redhead who sometimes masqueraded as a medieval knight, the man came by to visit, and Newell said no way.

"I said, 'This girl is off-limits to you,'" she said. Her daughter didn't agree, and one morning last May, the man drove by Channa's high school, picked her up and disappeared.

"(Police) say she chose to go with him, but I say she was lured," Newell said.

At the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, "online luring" makes up a small part of the center's overall cases, but the problems are increasing, said Gary Costello, director of the child exploitation unit at the Arlington, Va.-based center, a national clearinghouse for parents whose children have run away or were abducted.

This year, the center has received 11 reports of online luring, in which a child ran away after meeting an adult in cyberspace. Last year, the center handled seven such cases.

Although some teens have voluntarily left home, Costello treats them as children who were lured, as opposed to children who ran away.

"If someone came into the neighborhood, ended up talking to a child, befriending them, enticing them with promises of money and a better life, would you treat the case any differently?" he asked.

Parents should take a greater interest in their children's computer activities, Costello said. Often, when children spend hours alone on a computer, parents have no idea who they are meeting.

"Picture it like this: Would you let your 9- to 14-year-old go to the worst part of Seattle and walk the streets in the middle of the night?"

"That's what chat rooms are like, but the child can't see who is walking toward him," he said.

Johnson, the detective with the King County police Special Assault Unit, said online predators often target emotionally vulnerable children, who come from unstable families and have low self-esteem. So when an adult offers support, money and a new home, the child is at a disadvantage.

"When you get an adult who is methodically pulling a child out of his home, for whatever reasons, that's exploitation," he said.

#### Tips for parents

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children offers these tips for parents to help children have safe cyber-chats.

Never give out personal information such as address, phone number or school name before verifying the receiver of the information.

Get to know the services your child uses. Learn how to log on. Find out what types of information the services offer and whether there are ways for parents to block out objectionable material.

Never allow a child to arrange a face-to-face meeting with another computer user without parental permission. Make sure the first meeting is in a public spot and be sure to accompany the child.

Never respond to messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, threatening or make you feel uncomfortable. If you receive one, forward a copy to your service provider.

More of the center's tips can be found at its site: <http://www.missingkids.org/childsafety.html>

Another helpful Web site is <http://www.yahooligans.com/docs/safety>

America Online offers members resources on how to report a violation in a chat room and what to do if a harassing message is received.

It also offers "parental controls" that restrict a child's access, with the caveat: "It's important to note that no system of controls makes up for good old-fashioned parental supervision."

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## **Cyber-stalking**

**News & Observer, The (Raleigh, NC) - July 30, 2007**

Child predators didn't spring up from the fertile soil of the Internet. Physical and sexual abuse of children are age-old problems. But the Internet has brought a whole new aspect to child predation.

Computers in the home are ubiquitous. Kids easily master the machines, and they find the technology inviting. Meanwhile, adults who make it their business to become experts at stalking children have discovered social networking sites that are popular with young people. Using the sites, stalkers can zero in on kids from several states away, in relative anonymity, rather than from the bench near the swing set at the neighborhood park.

If there were any questions about the extent of the problem, good work by state Attorney General Roy Cooper has pried loose an answer. To combat predators, Cooper and attorneys general from several other states asked one of the more popular social sites, MySpace, to reveal the names of sex offenders who use the site. MySpace reluctantly complied in May, reporting about 7,000 offenders across the country on the site (245 of them were sex offenders registered in North Carolina).

The company updated its list last week. It now says that more than 29,000 offenders have MySpace profiles. And MySpace is just one of several social sites. Two years ago, a 34-year-old former Wake County sheriff's deputy posed as a 19-year-old N.C. State University student on several sites, including MySpace. Today he is in prison for persuading two Triangle boys he met online, ages 14 and 15, to have sex with him.

The attorneys general are pressing for better regulation of the networking sites, both by the companies that operate them and in state law. Cooper wants North Carolina legislators to require parental permission for youngsters to create a profile. He combines that effort with an educational campaign showing parents and teachers how kids can surf the Web safely.

Cooper also is pushing a bill that would require convicted sex offenders who create profiles to provide authorities with their e-mail addresses and all other on-line identifiers. As it stands now, offenders must tell the public where they live and when they move to a new neighborhood. But they can mask themselves as a teen on the Internet and prey on youngsters with impunity. The bill deserves approval.

Some lawyers and online companies complain that Cooper's efforts endanger the First Amendment rights of corporations. So far there's no overreaching on the attorney general's part.

At the same time, Internet companies need to design their sites with the vulnerability of youngsters in mind. Sexual crimes and violence against kids have exploded as the Internet has matured.

If foot-dragging lawmakers need help deciding whether to vote for Cooper's initiative, here's an aid: Put Internet firms on one side of the scale, and vulnerable youngsters at risk of being sexually assaulted or killed by predators on the other. Cooper's instincts are right.

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**'THESE PREDATORS ARE NO LONGER ISOLATED'**

**Maine Sunday Telegram (Portland, ME) - October 11, 1998**

**Author: ERIC BLOM Staff Writer**

The Internet has become a refuge for child molesters, a place to seek shelter from the social isolation and anger they often confront in real life.

Known molesters can be threatened by neighbors, featured on police handbills when they move into a neighborhood, harassed by fellow prisoners in jail, and isolated by watchful parents who tell children not to talk with strangers on the street. Online, predators are safe in the anonymity of made-up screen names. They can identify and target children at will. Pedophiles can share encouragement, support and advice with one another, describing child sexual abuse as pleasurable and natural, even beneficial to children.

"These predators are no longer isolated. They're part of a community on the Internet," said Colin Gabriel Hatcher, executive director of Cyberangels, a division of the Guardian Angels.

The most direct threat to children is online predation. Adults with a sexual interest in children can identify, contact and groom potential victims via the Internet.

No one is sure how common online predation has become. It's clearly involved in a small minority of all child sexual assaults.

Still, advocates for children say that online predation represents an entirely new kind of threat and poses risks that are difficult to address. The danger is growing as more children, and more adults with a sexual interest in children, go online.

"It has provided a whole new, additional venue for (predators) to operate," said Peter Banks, director of training for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. "Child molesters go where the children are, and the children are in cyberville."

Online predation also may be much more common than is generally recognized, he and other advocates for children said.

The anonymity of computer networks, the secretive nature of child sexual predators and the shame felt by many victims conspire to keep formal complaints down and the activity hidden.

"The number of people who are arrested is a very small number compared to the number of offenders out there," said Capt. Richard Wallikas of the Broome County (N.Y.) Sheriff's Department, which has an ongoing undercover operation online.

Banks agreed that police complaints are a poor measure of the problem.

"We don't fully understand, because of the nature of sexual victimization, how big a problem this is," Banks said. "Probably only one in 10 crimes gets reported."

Indeed, many of the incidents thus far have been discovered almost by accident.

For example, in July, Massachusetts police discovered that a 37-year-old Michigan man had met at least

two teen-age girls -- from Massachusetts and Georgia -- online and traveled to have sex with them. The man was caught after a sheriff's deputy saw a 16-year-old girl, chased by her father, running toward the man's car with a suitcase. The deputy became suspicious and accosted the driver.

Increasingly, online predation also is being detected through electronic undercover police operations.

Most recently, on Sept. 14, police arrested a Portland man on charges of distributing child pornography to an undercover police detective in New Hampshire. The Keene, N.H., detective was posing as a 14-year-old boy.

Michael Weeks, 23, allegedly sent the detective photos depicting boys involved in sex acts, said Portland Police Chief Michael Chitwood. Weeks also has been charged with molesting a 10-year-old Portland boy.

## INFORMATION HIGHWAY

### GETS THE WORD OUT

Direct contact between adult predators and children is not the only danger posed by online computer networks. Children also are threatened by the online communities that sexual predators are building on the Internet.

These burgeoning online pedophile networks indirectly threaten all children, not just those who use computers, said many advocates for children, federal police and social scientists.

Historically, shame and public condemnation have kept many pedophiles from assaulting children. Society uniformly condemns adult-child sex. Pedophiles seldom encounter other people who admit to a sexual desire for children, much less the illegal acts of raping, molesting or exploiting them.

"Traditionally, a good social control for pedophiles is condemnation," said Keith Durkin, a sociologist who has studied the use of online computers by pedophiles. "This has to be the most condemned form of human sexual behavior that there is."

The mainstream online community also condemns child molestation. Thousands of Web sites and forums have been established to fight the problem. Offenders' names are even being published on Web sites such as the one run by the Bangor Police Department.

However, in many other corners of the Internet, child molesters find advice and support that was not available to them prior to the growth of online computing.

"There's nothing to stop someone from advocating really horrible crimes against children" online, said Tracey O'Connell-Jay, executive director of WebWise Kids and the sister of a girl lured from home by an online predator in another state.

The Internet allows anyone to publish anything, of any length, for very little money. Freedom of speech is protected by the U.S. Constitution, even speech advocating child sexual abuse.

More than 8,000 sites on the World Wide Web encourage adults to have sex with children.

Some of these Web pages tell young people that they should never reveal their "secret" relationship with an adult. This is the opposite message from the one that child advocates say children need to hear. Other sites tell pedophiles how to locate school or playground addresses online before going away on vacation.

"These pages link to legitimate sites like Disney. Hello! If that doesn't raise red flags, I don't know what

will," said Debbie Mahoney, a California woman whose 12-year-old son was sexually assaulted by a man who later was charged with distributing child pornography online. Mahoney is founder of the advocacy group, Safeguarding Our Children -- United Mothers.

Newsgroups allow pedophiles from around the world to anonymously exchange messages of solace, share tips on how to lure children into sexual encounters and trade information on police strategies. Newsgroups are electronic bulletin boards where people from around the world post messages for others to read.

Durkin studied one such newsgroup in 1996 -- early in the growth of Internet popularity -- and found that it received about 200 new postings a month. He had no way to determine how many people read the postings without submitting their own messages.

Most of the people who posted articles admitted to being pedophiles. Many of their messages sought support from other newsgroup readers. A quarter of the users said they wanted to contact other pedophiles via telephone, mail, in-person meetings or electronic mail, Durkin found.

"Preferential child molesters who target boys have the capacity to victimize hundreds of young males," Durkin wrote in *Pedophiles in Cyberspace*, which is his article on the newsgroup. "If computer groups such as (this one) inspire only a few pedophiles to molest children, this would translate into hundreds -- even thousands -- of victims."

#### FINDING VALIDATION

#### FOR CRIMES, URGES

Other experts agree that propaganda advocating adult-child sex can increase the abuse of children.

"There's no crime in being a pedophile and suffering from those urges," said Douglas Rehman, a former Florida state police officer with extensive experience in online undercover operations.

"What you've got is people who have it under control before they get online and then they see there are all these other people with the same urges and interests."

Kenneth Lanning of the FBI Behavioral Science Unit explained the psychology behind this in his monograph, "Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis."

Many child molesters, he wrote, "spend their lives attempting to convince themselves that they are not immoral, not sexual deviants, or not criminals."

"They prefer to believe that they are high-minded, loving individuals whose behavior is misunderstood or politically incorrect at this time in history," Lanning wrote.

The Internet has made it possible for many more pedophiles to receive that kind of validation for their crimes from groups such as the North American Man Boy Love Association, or NAMBLA, which advocates adult-child sex.

"A group like NAMBLA now has an audience beyond its mailing list," Durkin said.

Literature from NAMBLA -- along with child pornography -- was found in the car allegedly used to transport 10-year-old Jeffrey Curley's body to the Great Works River in Maine after his murder and subsequent sexual assault last autumn. Charges are pending against two men in that case. It is not yet clear whether the material allegedly found in their possession came from the Internet or through the mail.

Still, material like the propoganda and pornography found in their vehicle is widely available online. And that material helps reduce the social control of shunning and shame that keeps many pedophiles from acting on their sexual impulses.

"These people who were hiding under a rock someplace are actively out there communicating with each other" and with children, Mahoney said.

**Memo:** The graphic accompanying this article HOW TO PROTECT CHILDREN must be read on microfilm

**Edition:** CITY

**Section:** FRONT

**Page:** 7A

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