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Mon, 09 Jan 2006

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- Frontpage
- Business
- Court News
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- Feature Stories
- Government**
- Local News
- Obituaries
- Sports

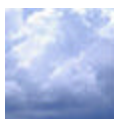
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- Local Movies
- Local Weather

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Paris, IL

Current Conditions:



Overcast,
37°F,
feels like
31°F

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- Court hears scheduled cases
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- Business
- Court News
- Education
- Feature Stories
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- Local News
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Legislation proposed requiring child sex offenders vote absentee



Written by Staff

Sat, 07 Jan 2006

HUTSONVILLE – Rep. Roger Eddy (R-Hutsonville) is continuing his push in the new legislative session to make schools safe havens from sexual predators.

He recently filed legislation to require convicted child sex offenders vote by absentee ballot if their regular polling place is on school grounds. "Over the past several years my colleagues and I have passed several measures to help keep our children safe by keeping convicted child predators away from daycare facilities and schools," said Eddy.

"One problem still remaining though is what to do on Election Day if the sex offender's polling place is in a school building. We need to ensure our children are safe at school every day, including election day."

Eddy, a school superintendent, stressed that prohibiting child sex offenders from entering school grounds to cast their ballot will not infringe on the right or ability to vote.

"These individuals can vote absentee in person before election day at their county courthouse, or by absentee mail-in ballot," said Eddy. "This will not pose a hardship."

The new bill will move through the regular legislative process when the General Assembly reconvenes Jan. 11.

Edgar County's representatives, Eddy, Rep. Chapin Rose (R-Mahomet) and Sen. Dale Righter (R-Mattoon), were instrumental in the passage of a law during the 2005 legislative session that bars convicted child sex offenders from entering school grounds, except when summoned by school officials for conferences regarding the offender's offspring.

A convicted child sex offender living in Edgar County has filed a John Doe lawsuit against Paris Union 95 and Crestwood Unit 4 districts claiming enforcement of the state law by the local districts denies him rights as a parent. The suit was filed in the United States District Court, Central District of Illinois, Urbana.

Judge Harold A. Baker is currently weighing two preliminary motions in the case.

John Doe's attorney wants an injunction ordering Paris and Crestwood not to enforce the state law while the suit is in motion, and school attorneys requested the court remove the John Doe appellation and order the plaintiff to proceed under his real name.

Baker is expected to render a decision on the motions in the coming weeks.

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