



Letter to the Editor - April 18, 2006

Annapolis fails to protect kids from child molesters

A bill sponsored by 37 members of the House of Delegates was a great opportunity to protect and defend children from the worst kind of evil in society, child rapists. H.B. 1401, Maryland's version of "Jessica's Law" would have created mandatory 25-year prison sentences for any person found guilty of raping a child under 13 years old. Unfortunately, this bill never saw the light of day because of egos, lack of attention and election-year politics.

The bill is titled Jessica's Law in memory of Florida's Jessica Lunsford, who was 9 years old when she was sexually assaulted and brutally murdered in 2005. Her murderer was a serial child molester and had been previously convicted. He was registered with Florida state officials, but he was not living at the address he had indicated. It becomes clearer with each repeat offender, that the "self-policing" of child sex offenders doesn't work. Jessica's Law would hopefully deter some sexual crimes against children but would most definitely remove these predators from our communities for 25 years, which is the only safe option.

With at least six states that have already passed this law, and 23 heading in that direction, it is a sad day for Maryland. Our children are growing up in a state with more than 4,000 child sex offenders. There is no way to know how many children could be protected by this law, but we do know who has let them down.

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