
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

June 26, 2007

Ald. Tony Zielinski
Ald. Jim Bohl
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Tough Zielinski-Bohl Law Would Keep Sex Offenders Away From Milwaukee Children

Milwaukee aldermen Tony Zielinski and Jim Bohl have drafted a tough new ordinance to protect city children by keeping sex offenders away from where they live, play and learn.

Aldermen Zielinski and Bohl, who are jointly sponsoring the legislation, said the measure would prohibit designated sex offenders from living or loitering within 2,000 feet of places in Milwaukee where children can be expected to be found. Designated sex offenders under the ordinance include persons required to register with the state under the Wisconsin Sex Offender Registry Program, for any offense against a child or any person required to register under the state sex offender program and who has been designated a “Special Bulletin Notification” sex offender.

Aldermen Zielinski and Bohl will hold a news conference about the proposed sex offender ordinance at noon on Wednesday, June 27, 2007, in the first floor Rotunda at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St.

Ald. Zielinski said examples of registerable offenses under the ordinance include but aren’t limited to first-degree sexual assault, sexual intercourse with a child and incest with a child. He said the ordinance would help restrict residency of designated sex offenders to protect Milwaukee children and – in part – to prevent the city from ending up as “a dumping ground” for sex offenders as the doors are being shut tight in adjacent communities.

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Tough Sex Offender Law/ADD ONE

“We are watching the surrounding communities fall like dominoes as they restrict sex offenders from relocating to their communities, and we too need our own restrictions to protect our families and our children too,” Ald. Zielinski said.

“I believe this legislation protects children and does so on stronger legal grounds than ordinances that have been passed in other Wisconsin communities,” Ald. Bohl said. "It is not uncommon for us to hear from concerned residents about registered sex offenders living a short distance from schools, parks or other other places where children congregate, and this proposed ordinance would address those concerns."

The multifaceted ordinance would prohibit sex offenders from living near parks, schools, licensed day care centers, recreational trails, swimming pools, playgrounds or any other place designated by the city as a place where children are known to congregate. Offenders who violate the residency provisions of the ordinance could pay fines from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per violation, and violators of the loitering provisions face fines of \$500-\$1,000.

The ordinance would grandfather in offenders who established residency in a prohibited zone prior to its effective date, and there are other exceptions as well.

Ald. Zielinski said designated offenders would be able to seek an exemption to the residency restrictions by appealing to a judge. It would then be up to a judge to decide whether an offender should receive an exemption.

Ald. Bohl said Milwaukee parents and children deserve protection when sex offenders are set free. “Quite frankly, studies clearly show that sex offenders are very likely to be re-arrested for a new rape or sexual assault, and given the high rate of recidivism for sex offenders and the fact that reducing opportunities and temptations is important to minimizing the risk of re-offense, there is a need to protect our children where they congregate or play in public places above and beyond the protections afforded by state law near schools, day care centers and other places children frequent,” he said.

The Common Council’s Public Safety Committee will hear the measure at 9 a.m. on Thursday, June 28, 2007 in room 301-B at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St.