

BACK TO SCHOOL INTERNET AWARENESS

As kids have recently started back to school and will soon begin their homework assignments, I would like to take this opportunity to make you aware of some Internet safety measures. The Internet has become a wonderful resource for our children to utilize in accessing information on everything from the history of the Olympic games to the climate on the planet Mars even a review of their favorite movies. However, we must also remember that the same tool that opens our children's "window to the world" can also expose them to some real dangers. As a state senator, I have been a strong proponent for Internet crime reforms through numerous pieces of legislation including Public Act 235 of 1999, Public Act 32 of 1999 and Public Act 212 of 2000 that:

- *Make it a felony punishable by up to two years in prison, a \$2,000 fine, or both, for using the Internet to stalk someone with a subsequent offense punishable by up to five years in prison, a \$5,000 fine, or both;

- *Make it a felony punishable by up to two years in prison, a \$2,000 fine, or both, for using the Internet to solicit a minor; and

- *Require libraries to restrict minors' access to the Internet through the use of filtering software or adoption of a policy that requires parent's permission or other measures.

Despite the safeguards I have put in place to protect our children from the dangers of the Internet, there is still no substitute for parental oversight. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to talk to your kids about how to use the Internet safely.