

## JUVENILE COURT JURISDICTION

This session the General Assembly enacted legislation effective January 1, 2010, that will refer 16- and 17-year-olds to the juvenile justice system instead of the adult criminal justice system unless they commit the most serious of crimes. The reason is that the state recognizes that 16- and 17-year-olds do not always appreciate their actions the way that adults do, and the juvenile system's focus on rehabilitation instead of punishment. We believe that everyone will benefit from the new law. Public Act 07-4

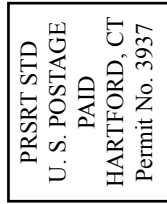
## PROSECUTION, REGISTRATION AND MONITORING OF SEXUAL OFFENDERS

Public Act 07-4 includes the General Assembly's 2007 effort to protect Connecticut's children by extending Megan's Law protections into cyberspace. Sexual predators must now register e-mails, instant message addresses, and other internet communication identifiers. If they fail to do so or use an unregistered e-mail address, the penalty is returning to prison. Also, the law establishes a legal mechanism for online communities such as MySpace to communicate with Connecticut law enforcement when sex offenders use their sites. Additionally, there is a new crime, the misrepresentation of age in order to entice a minor into sexual activity.



Another provision directs the Sex Offender Risk Assessment Board to recommend which offenders should be barred from living within 1000 feet of a school. It toughens the penalties for sex offenders by requiring mandatory minimum sentences for certain offenses, and makes it easier for a child to submit testimony against an accused sex offender.

**Questions? For more information,  
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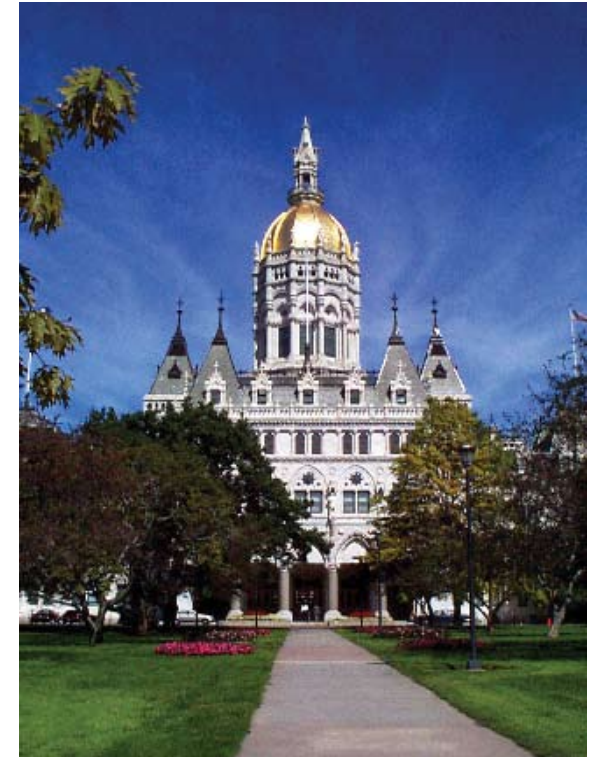
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**Capitol News -  
Updates from Session 2007**

## **CREATING A NEW DIVISION OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

The National Center for Disease Control recently reported that Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is prevalent in one out of every 150 newborns. Connecticut already has thousands of children and adults diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder without mental retardation. Children are provided services by their local school districts, but once they are twenty-one years old, they receive few or no services from the state. This historic bill establishes a new division within the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and instructs it to apply for a Medicaid waiver to receive matching federal funding to provide services for people with autism. Over time the new division will research, design and implement the delivery of appropriate and necessary services and programs for all citizens of the state with autism spectrum disorders. This division will now create an early intervention program to deliver services to children at risk or diagnosed with ASD who were previously placed in DDS's Birth-to-Three program, and will provide services for those 3-21 years of age. This new division will also develop a workforce and an autism spectrum curriculum in conjunction with the Department of Higher Education. This bill is a major victory for people with Autism and their families in Connecticut. Public Act 07-4

## **MAKING OUR PLAYGROUNDS SAFER FOR CHILDREN**

This law expands the existing ban on applying lawn care pesticides to school playing fields and playgrounds. The law previously applied to only elementary schools and now applies to schools through grade eight. This will keep more of our school children safe from dangerous exposure to pesticides. This bill also shifts oversight and enforcement of this law from the local Boards of Education to the Department of Environmental Protection. Local superintendents of schools will still have the power to authorize emergency applications of lawn care pesticides in health emergencies to any public elementary in addition to middle schools. Public Act 07-168



## **SECURITY ASSESSMENTS AND ASSISTANCE FOR SCHOOLS**

In the wake of a local school invasion and in light of the tragic Virginia Tech shooting, the General Assembly strengthened the plan to protect students of all ages by increasing security planning and infrastructure at schools and colleges. In an effort to provide a safe environment for elementary and secondary school students, the General Assembly established a competitive grant for security infrastructure improvements including security systems in entryways, purchase of security devices and school personnel training. Grants will reimburse communities for 20-80% of the eligible expenses upon the completion of a uniform security assessment and the development of an emergency plan. In addition, to secure school construction funds, school districts must include security infrastructure plans in project plans. Finally, schools must conduct self-assessments based on the Safe Schools Facilities Check List from the National Clearinghouse of Educational Facilities.

To prevent tragedies at Connecticut's institutions for higher education, colleges, universities and private occupational schools now are required to submit emergency response plans by October 1, 2007 and annually thereafter to the Department of Public Safety, Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and local first responders. An essential part of the plan is the notification of students, employees and visitors during an emergency. Public Act 07-208

## **OPERATORS' LICENSES BEARING A SCHOOL BUS ENDORSEMENT**

Prompted by a fatal accident involving an unqualified school bus driver, the legislature passed a bill that requires additional background checks for people applying for school bus licenses. The legislation prohibits the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) from issuing temporary licenses. Additional provisions of the bill require, rather than allow, DMV to notify school bus companies and school districts of any change in the status of a driver's license. The bill also not only expands required drug testing, but also automatically disqualifies those who test positive. Public Act 07-224

## **CONNECTICUT STUDENT LOAN FOUNDATION**

With students facing higher student loan interest rates and growing student loan debt, the General Assembly took action enabling the Connecticut Student Loan Foundation to offer student loans at better, lower rates. The Connecticut Student Loan Foundation (CSLF) now is authorized to issue federal tax-exempt bonds, notes or other obligations subject to the private activity cap. CSLF must use the realized savings from issuing tax-exempt bonds to fund borrower benefits such as fee reductions, interest rate reductions, rebates, or loan forgiveness. Currently, CSLF only can issue taxable bonds. Public Act 07-109

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

In a continuing effort to provide better protection to families from violence in the home, the General Assembly took steps to prevent weekend incidents of domestic violence. In an important step forward, now police can issue a weekend protective order so that the original incident does not escalate once an alleged abuser is released. Also, Public Act 07-123 establishes a new crime for strangulation (class D felony) and establishes a mechanism by which a police officer can impose non-financial conditions on an arrestee for a family violence crime prior to release. If a police officer is unable to find a bail commissioner to set conditions of release, then that police officer may set the conditions.

The bill gives the court an expanded list of reasons to issue a criminal restraining order against someone convicted of a crime against a family member. Conditions may include requiring an arrestee to: (1) avoid all contact with the alleged victim, (2) comply with restrictions on travel, (3) refrain from using weapons, and/or (4) refrain from consuming any intoxicants or controlled substances.

**Statements to Police** This legislation prohibits the use of any statement made during the bail interview as evidence in any case related to the incident that led to the arrest.

**Stun Guns** Also, this law classifies stun guns as electronic defense weapons which makes it illegal for anyone other than a police officer to carry them on their person or in their vehicles.