



Middlesex Sheriff's Office

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Sheriff Koutoujian, Senator Finegold announce legislation targeting child sexual predators

Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian and State Senator Barry Finegold (D—Andover) announced proposed legislation this week targeting child sexual predators in Massachusetts.

The legislation – *An Act regarding asset forfeiture* – was proposed by Sheriff Koutoujian and filed by Senator Finegold in the Senate. Modeled on the state's existing controlled substances and human trafficking statutes, the legislation would allow state and county prosecutors to petition the court for forfeiture of specific property in child pornography and enticement cases.

With the court's permission, items used for the production, storage or dissemination of child pornography, such as cameras and computers, or of items used in the enticement of minors, such as cell phones and motor vehicles, could be seized and disposed of at the conclusion of cases.

Under the legislation proposed by Koutoujian and Finegold the funds generated through asset forfeiture would go towards programs including Internet safety education efforts, victim rehabilitation and therapy and the purchase of technical equipment for law enforcement agencies.

"Crime evolves and with it so must our laws," said Sheriff Koutoujian. "The federal government and a host of states already have asset forfeiture statutes that cover this type of crime. It's my belief this could help us in Massachusetts better educate our children on how to stay safe online and enhance law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute those who prey on our children."

"This legislation will give the Sheriff's office, as well as the District Attorney and Attorney General, the tools they need to fund investigations into these heinous crimes," Finegold said. "Last year there were over 40 state police investigations related to child pornography in Middlesex County alone. This is an ugly problem in our state but our hope is this bill will help bring that number down through Internet safety education and increased financial resources for investigators."

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