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**REPRESENTATIVE ARCIERO AND SHERIFF KOUTOUJIAN
FILE BILL TARGETING CHILD PREDATORS**

State Representative James Arciero and Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian have filed a bill targeting those convicted in child pornography and child enticement cases and allowing for the seizure of assets tied to those crimes. The proposal, House Bill 1148: An Act Regarding Asset Forfeiture, if passed, would allow state and county prosecutors to petition courts at the end of successful prosecutions to seize the assets of individuals used in the commission of these crimes after conviction.

“We must have a zero tolerance for those who would engage in child pornography and enticement, some of the most heinous crimes in society. This common sense measure will provide a new source of funding to help prevent future cases of abuse and protect children from these dangerous predators,” said State Representative James Arciero.

With the approval of courts, the items used for the production, storage or dissemination of child pornography would be seized, wiped of its content and sold. Proceeds from the sales would fund programs aimed at Internet safety education, victim rehabilitation and therapy, and the purchase of technical equipment for law enforcement agencies. Common equipment used in such crimes ranges from cameras and computers to cell phones and motor vehicles, as well as some residential buildings.

“It’s vitally important our laws evolve to keep up with the crimes they are designed to address,” said Sheriff Koutoujian. “With the permission of the court, items used to entice minors or produce or disseminate child pornography should be forfeited to help fund programs to prevent future cases of abuse. There is nothing more important than protecting our children and ensuring we give our law enforcement agencies the necessary tools to pursue child pornographers as aggressively as possible.”

The law is modeled on existing statutes which allow for the seizure of property in cases dealing with controlled substances and human trafficking and offers an additional source of funds to address issues of child

pornography and child enticement. In addition to the sponsorship of Representative Arciero and Sheriff Koutoujian, the bill has 18 bipartisan House co-sponsors.

As drafted, House Bill 1148: An Act Regarding Asset Forfeiture, provides that the seized property and the resultant funds be equally distributed between the arresting authority and the prosecuting entity. As envisioned, the prosecuting District Attorney's office or Attorney General's office would receive half of the funds and either the local police, state police or sheriff's offices, whichever agency or combination thereof, being awarded the other portion. Both allocations would be for purposes of public safety and would be specifically directed toward defraying the costs associated with investigations, providing technical equipment, matching funds for federal grants and other law enforcement purposes deemed appropriated by the Attorney General, district attorneys, sheriffs, the colonel of the state police and local police chiefs. A portion of the funds will be dedicated to internet safety education and other cyber-crime watch programs which further a law enforcement purpose. Funds could not be used as a source of revenue for the operating needs of any department.

The bill is currently before the Joint Committee on the Judiciary awaiting the determination of a public hearing date.

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