

NEWS

From the Office of

Bill Postmus

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 21, 2006



For information, contact
Brad Mitzelfelt (909) 387-4830

LUNSFORD JOINS STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS IN 'CHILD SAFETY TASK FORCE' KICK-OFF

RANCHO CUCAMONGA – Mark Lunsford, father of Jessica Lunsford, for whom the “Sexual Predator Punishment and Control Act of 2006” is named (Jessica’s Law), joined San Bernardino County state and local officials today at Rancho Cucamonga City Hall to initiate a Child Safety Task Force to help municipalities prepare to implement local-government provisions of the initiative measure.

Lunsford tearfully described his personal suffering since losing his nine-year-old daughter, who was sexually assaulted and murdered last year by a registered sex offender in Florida. He urged those in attendance to take full advantage of Jessica’s Law to protect children against sexual predators. Saying that he doesn’t understand why some legislators are reluctant to pass tough anti-sex-offender laws, Lunsford added, “You’re fortunate here in California, because you have a tool that many states don’t have: the initiative process. You can do something to protect your children.”

San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus and Fourth District Supervisor Gary Ovitt, both co-chairmen of the initiative, were also joined by State Senators Bob Dutton and George Runner, Assemblywoman Sharon Runner, and council members from several local cities at today’s event. The Runners, who jointly co-authored the Jessica’s Law bills in the legislature as well as the ballot initiative, urged city council members to plan ahead so that “predator-free zones” can be pre-zoned and go into effect upon passage of the measure in November.

A key provision of Jessica’s Law, which qualified last week for California’s November election ballot, would prohibit registered sex-offenders from living within 2,000 feet of places where children congregate or assemble. Specific locations identified include schools and parks. However, at the discretion of local governments, locations such as children’s recreation centers, daycare facilities and public libraries may also be included as Predator-Free Zones under Section 21(c) of the initiative.

Jessica’s Law would also require electronic monitoring of sex offenders for life, eliminate “good-time” prison credits, increase penalties for possession of child pornography, and increase sentences and parole terms for sex offenders.

The Task Force is intended to encourage municipalities to identify Predator-Free Zones and to provide a forum and information clearinghouse of legal and policy considerations that should be taken

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CHILD SAFETY KICK-OFF

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into account by cities and counties. Cities represented in the Task Force so far include Adelanto, Apple Valley, Barstow, Chino, Chino Hills, Fontana, Victorville, Ontario and San Bernardino.

Postmus said the Task Force will meet during the Summer to review progress made by the cities and the county. "I want our children to be fully protected immediately upon passage of Jessica's Law," said Postmus, who along with Supervisor Ovitt is a Co-Chairman of the Jessica's Law initiative effort.

Supervisor Ovitt announced Tuesday the formation of a working group within San Bernardino County government to prepare for the implementation of Jessica's Law at the county level once the initiative is approved by the voters. "It is our intent to protect the children of our society first and foremost, and to assure that a sex offender is not living near places where children go to school or play," Ovitt said.

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PHOTO CAPTION:

Mark Lunsford, father of nine-year-old Jessica Lunsford, who was killed by a registered sex offender in Florida last year and for whom "Jessica's Law," "The Sexual Predator Punishment and Control Act of 2006," is named, speaks at Rancho Cucamonga City Hall April 21. Lunsford spoke about the initiative measure, which will appear on the November 2006 California election ballot, as part of a kick-off event for a "Child Safety Task Force" among local jurisdictions whose goal will be to help prepare municipalities for implementation of local protections against sex offenders should the measure pass in November. Also pictured are (Front row, left to right): Senator George Runner, Assemblywoman Sharon Runner (both co-authors of the proposed legislation), Senator Bob Dutton, regional co-chair, and Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus, statewide co-chair. Fourth District Supervisor Gary Ovitt, also a statewide co-chair, was present but is not pictured.