

BLOG: Senate moves to track sex offenders on the Internet

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Following up on previous legislation to keep track of sex offenders in Texas, the Senate has passed legislation that would require them to give their Internet accounts, e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers to the state's Sex Offender Registry. The bill by Sen. Florence Shapiro, R-Plano, also would prohibit certain sex offenders on probation or parole from accessing social networking sites such as MySpace.com and Facebook.com.

"With today's new Internet sites, it is time to take this fight into the virtual world and target those who victimize our children through social networking sites, chat rooms and live video gaming systems," Shapiro said Tuesday, citing a recent report from MySpace.com that it has removed nearly 90,000 sex offenders from its website. Shapiro said she worked with Attorney General Greg Abbott's office in drafting the measure.

"The more secret, the more private they can be, the more they can do their dastardly deeds," Shapiro said of her focus on the Internet to protect children from sexual predators. The bill, which would empower law enforcement agencies to monitor the online activity of sex offenders, now goes to the House.

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