

(Washington, DC) - Today, Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-4) voted in support of legislation that will help protect children from online sexual predators. The Keeping the Internet Devoid of Sexual Predators (KIDS) Act (H.R. 719) would require sex offenders to register their e-mail and instant message addresses with the National Sex Offender Registry.

"As a parent, it's frightening to hear the statistics - 20 percent of middle and high school students have arranged meetings with someone they have met online," said Congressman Altmire.

"While the Internet has proved to be a wonderful tool for schoolwork and for staying connected with friends, it provides frightening anonymity for sexual predators and puts our children at risk. Today's legislation will provide popular social networking sites, like MySpace and Facebook, with another tool to protect its users from online predators."

The KIDS Act would require the Department of Justice to make registered sex offenders' e-mail addresses, instant message addresses, or other similar Internet identifiers available to commercial social networking sites wishing to compare its database of registered users to known sex offenders in the National Sex Offender Registry. The bill would require registered sex offenders to provide this information to law enforcement officials or face up to 10 years of imprisonment. The measure would also make it a crime, punishable by up to 20 years in prison, for anyone over the age of 18 to misrepresent their age with the intent to use the Internet to engage in criminal sexual conduct with a minor.

The House also passed the Safeguarding America's Families by Enhancing and Reorganizing New and Efficient Technologies (SAFER NET) Act (H.R. 3461) which would implement a national public awareness campaign to inform parents, kids and teachers about Internet safety. The legislation would instruct the Federal Trade Commission to promote safe online activity and help prevent cyber-crime and threats to financial information and privacy. Congressman Altmire is a cosponsor of both bills.