

Contact:

Rory J. Roundtree
Phone: 314-622-4114
Fax: 314-589-6921
RoundtreeR@StLouisCity.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 29th, 2007

President Lewis E. Reed Introduces Cyber Harassment Legislation

St. Louis – President Lewis E. Reed and Alderwoman April Ford-Griffin have introduced a board bill that criminalizes “cyber harassment.” Board Bill 404 creates the crime of cyber harassment and outlines what constitutes the offense.

President Reed stated “I introduced this legislation because I believe it is imperative that we protect individuals from harassment. With my background in Internet Technology, I understand that as technology develops, legislation must be crafted which addresses these new issues. It is my hope that we can avoid future situations like those that have affected surrounding communities.” Alderwoman Ford-Griffin added, “As a mother, I have seen first-hand the role that the internet and technology plays in the lives of our children and society as a whole. It is my hope that by introducing this legislation, we can address these issues and prevent future cyber harassment.”

The bill can be found at St. Louis Board of Aldermen website <http://stlcin.missouri.org/alderman>.

For more information please contact Rory J. Roundtree at 314-622-4114.

XXX

Overview for “Cyber Harassment” Bill

- Ordinance prohibits any person from harassment by means or use of the Internet or other electronic communications
- Establishes definitions for “electronic communications,” “electronic communications device,” “family or household member,” and “harass.”
- Harass is defined as “to engage in a course of conduct that serves no legitimate purpose and would cause...substantial emotional distress, and shall actually cause substantial emotional distress,” or “contact by a person over age eighteen with a person under the age of eighteen that would cause a reasonable parent to fear for the well-being of their minor child...”
- The offense of cyber-harassment consists of two basic parts:
 - An individual intends to harass, alarm, annoy, abuse, threaten, intimidate, torment or embarrass any other person by means of the transmission of electronic communication or knowingly permits an electronic communication to be transmitted from an electronic communication device under the person’s control using lewd, lascivious, etc... words, images or language; anonymously or repeatedly whether or not the conversation occurs; or threatening to inflict injury on the person or property of the person communicated with or any member of his or her household; or
 - An individual uses or allows the use of an electronic communications device under the person’s control to harass, alarm, annoy, abuse, threaten, intimidate, torment or embarrass any other person through the direct action of the individual or through the actions of a third party, which third party actions are instigated, initiated, prompted or brought about by the person’s communication.

- This ordinance applies to any offense committed either at the place from which the communication was made or at the place where the communication was received.
- Penalty for violation of this ordinance is a fine of not less than \$100 no more than \$500 and/or a term of imprisonment not more than 90 days