

Schumer's Legislation Targets Sex Offenders Online

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Sean Carroll (Rochester, N.Y.) -- U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer (D, N.Y.) will be in Rochester on Thursday to talk about his proposed legislation that would closely monitor convicted sex offenders' activities online.

Sex offenders already have to register their home address with a national registry and Schumer wants sex offenders to report their e-mail addresses and screen names as well.

High school junior Alex Peterson of Greece uses his trusty laptop computer for everything from school projects to talking to friends. However, when told about Schumer's proposed law aimed at helping keep sexual predators off his desktop, the 17-year-old had his doubts.

"I like the idea, but I don't know how they could do it because you can change your name, your IP address, things like that. They can just do that themselves and then they're anonymous and they can go commit a crime again," he said

Peterson's dad, Eric, has his own doubts about how effective cyber laws can be especially watching his own son navigate through cyber-space with ease.

"Kids are more tech savvy than we are at this point in time," he said.

Dr. Sam McQuade is a professor and graduate program coordinator for the cross-disciplinary professional studies master's degree program in the Rochester Institute of Technology, College of Applied Science and Technology.

"Parents are screaming, 'What can I do about this? What should I do?'" he said.

McQuade, an expert in cyber crimes, and RIT are heading up the "Rochester Regional Cyber Safety and Ethics Initiative." This spring he'll be surveying thousands of students in 20 Rochester-area school districts to find out how they're using technology.

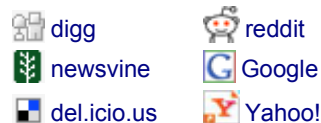
He hopes the results of the study will spur more laws to keep kids safe online.



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"It's so much more of a problem than sex crimes only. Kids deserve to be safe when they're computing online and using electronic devices," he said.

McQuade said they will select random students at all grade levels during May and June. He expects to have the results by July.

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