
January 21, 2007

The Week in New Jersey

By DAVID K. RANDALL

Bills Would Track Sex Offenders' Web Use

Monitoring of sex offenders that would extend beyond Megan's Law to include computer use is the focus of several bills that have been introduced in the State Legislature.

While the state now requires sex offenders to register with the local police under the terms of Megan's Law, legislation sponsored by Assemblywoman Linda R. Greenstein would require them to notify the authorities of online identities used in chat or instant messaging conversations and to give the police their user passwords.

Another bill, sponsored by Ms. Greenstein, a Democrat from Monroe, and Senate President Richard J. Codey, a Democrat from West Orange, would severely limit sex offenders who used the Internet to commit their crimes from gaining access to the Internet in the future. A bill with provisions similar to Ms. Greenstein's has been introduced by Assemblywoman Jennifer Beck, [a Republican](#) from Morganville.

"This is an attempt to try to strengthen Megan's Law and to prevent the use of computers in stalking children, when they're obviously being used in many cases for that purpose," Ms. Greenstein said. "The home computer is obviously the place where solicitation takes place."

There are 2,166 sex offenders registered in [New Jersey](#), according to the attorney general's office.

A prohibition on Internet use by sex offenders may raise questions about the right to privacy and the law's enforceability. "It's one thing for you as a parole officer to read my mail, and it's another to say that you can't write letters," said George C. Thomas III, a professor of criminal law at the Newark campus of the Rutgers School of Law.

Prof. Vera Bergelson, who teaches a course called the Moral Puzzles of Criminal Law at Rutgers in Newark, said that the proposed restrictions on sex offenders participating in online social groups like MySpace might be written too broadly. "It could prevent people from participating in political

discussions and joining book clubs or movie clubs,” she said.

Ms. Greenstein said she assumed that the bills would run into opposition. “Obviously anytime you’re going to put restrictions on people, it at least raises questions, but we’ve already placed limitations under Megan’s Law and it’s passed constitutional muster,” she said.

All of the bills are in committee and have yet to be scheduled for a vote, Ms. Greenstein said.

Rutgers Calls a Hold on Season Tickets

Let’s say you followed the Rutgers football team this past season — from the highs of its nationally televised win over Louisville to the lows of its gut-wrenching overtime loss to West Virginia and then to the final, triumphant demolition of Kansas State in the Texas Bowl.

You’re excited and ready to take that next step: season tickets to the eight Rutgers home games. And they are cheap — \$240 for any sideline seat.

But you’re out of luck.

“We’ve kind of put that on hold,” said Kevin MacConnell, deputy director of athletics at Rutgers.

Yes, Rutgers, which four years ago struggled to put 27,000 bodies in its 41,500-seat stadium in Piscataway, now has no tickets available for the average fan. Indeed, Rutgers has introduced a waiting list, for which fans can pay \$20 (nonrefundable) for the privilege of one day becoming a season-ticket holder. The \$20 would go toward the season ticket.

“It’s a great problem to have,” Mr. MacConnell said. “We’ll solve it.”

For the 2006 season there were 11,600 season-ticket holders. But after the stunning success of this season, the university added 9,500 new ticket holders for 2007. Rutgers reserves 10,000 student tickets a game and 3,400 for the away team.

That would seem to leave about 7,000 tickets. But Rutgers has yet to ask current season-ticket holders whether they want to add seats to their plan; it will do so in the coming weeks.

It is unclear whether those on the waiting list will become season-ticket holders (there are 9,600 hopefuls so far), but Mr. MacConnell said he would try to accommodate everyone.

“It’s nothing we could have imagined,” he said. “It just happened so quickly. Everything’s off the charts.”

JONATHAN MILLER

NJ Transit Considering Manhattan-Scranton Line

Among its many capital improvement projects, [New Jersey Transit](#) is considering introducing a train line that would run from Manhattan and Hoboken to Scranton, Pa., along the Route 80 corridor.

Called the Lackawanna Cutoff, the proposed line is an 88-mile stretch of level ground that was once used by the Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad and later by Conrail, which abandoned its right of way more than two decades ago and removed the tracks. New Jersey Transit bought the land in 2001.

“We’re advancing this project, including public meetings this month,” said Joe Dee, a New Jersey Transit spokesman. The plan has a projected cost of \$551 million, not including the purchase of property for stations. An environmental assessment and conceptual design are due this year.

The Lackawanna Cutoff line would employ diesel-powered trains and have stops in Andover and Blirstown in New Jersey and Analomink, the Delaware Water Gap, East Stroudsburg, Pocono Mountain, Scranton and Tobyhanna in Pennsylvania.

It is not clear when service could begin. “A timeline for future phases of the project will be contingent on funding availability,” Mr. Dee said.

Mr. Dee said that the departure of George D. Warrington, who has said he is stepping down as executive director of New Jersey Transit at the end of March, would have no effect on the Lackawanna Cutoff project.

JOHN HOLL

[Home](#)

- [World](#)
- [U.S.](#)
- [N.Y. / Region](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Arts](#)

- [Style](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Automobiles](#)
- [Back to Top](#)

[Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company](#)

- [Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Search](#)
- [Corrections](#)
 - [RSS](#)
- [First Look](#)
 - [Help](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Work for Us](#)
- [Site Map](#)