

**Child Protection**

Lt. Gov. Jimmy Green has announced that he has asked Sen. Elton Edwards of Greensboro to introduce legislation intended to prevent the sexual exploitation of children. Called The Child Protection Act of 1983, the bill is expected to be introduced in the N.C. Senate.

"Our children are our State's most precious resource," Green said. "North Carolina has a compelling interest in their protection. More than 800,000 children nationwide under the age of 16 are engaged in prostitution, and another 30,000, some as young as three years old, may be enticed or forced into the child pornography industry. The child pornography industry alone reaps in excess of \$2-billion annually. North Carolina has a severe, and poorly understood, runaway problem. Homeless and penniless, runaways frequently become the victims of prostitution and pornography," he added. "Sen. Edwards has worked diligently for several months to make this a model of this kind of legislation, and I commend him for his hard work. We must do everything we can to stop this shameful use of powerless children. We must protect and safeguard them from those sick individuals who would exploit them. I urge everyone, parents or not, to join me in support of Sen. Elton Edwards' bill," Green concluded.

Sen. Elton Edwards said that there were few things as important as protecting our children from those who would, for their own gain or satisfaction, abuse them or use them for immoral or improper purposes. "I have been much concerned about this problem, and feel that it is an urgent necessity that we deal with it now and in a way that will provide a meaningful deterrent to abusing our children in this way," Edwards stated.

Edwards' bill, which is divided into five sections, would make sexual abuse a Class I felony, and suggests psychiatric counseling for both defendant and victim. Promoting child prostitution would be a Class G felony, while child prostitution itself would merely be a misdemeanor. The bill recommends counseling for the children involved, and the sealing of their arrest and guilt records. The child's records may be expunged if no further violations occurred within two years.

Child pornography would also be a Class G felony, as would the encouragement of a sexual performance by a child. Mistake of age is considered to be no defense in any of these offenses, under this bill.

The section on child pornography is similar to a bill introduced by Senator Robert Warren of Benson as a result of the Legislative Research Commission's recent study of the Obscenity Laws.

**Achievement Academy**

The U.S. Achievement Academy announced that Sylvia Canada, an advisor at Gates County High School, has been named to the Academy's National Advisory Board.

The USAA National Advisory Board is composed of select teachers throughout the nation who support the Academy's endeavors to recognize achievement. The National Advisory Board will advise the Academy, evaluate scholarships and honors programs, and support the activities of the USAA.

Canada joins more than 700 teachers nationwide in serving on the USAA National Advisory Board. This year, more than 40,000 teachers have dominated over 400,000 students for the Academy honors and scholarship programs. The select group of teachers on the National Advisory Board will serve these programs in an advisory capacity.

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