



## Perris News

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### Public Campaign Against Sex Offender a Success

A sex offender and convicted murderer will not be coming to live near Perris after all.

City, Riverside County and state officials began a whirlwind campaign to keep Donald Schmidt from being paroled to a group home in Good Hope, west of Perris. Schmidt, 38, was convicted in 1988 of drowning a 3-year-old girl after sexually assaulting her. The crime took place in Santa Cruz County.

Schmidt has no connection to Riverside County and has been labeled by mental health experts as a sexual sadist. The owners of the group home extended him an invitation earlier this month.

When Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley and State Sen. Bill Emmerson, R-Hemet, heard about the proposal began a campaign to whip up public support against the move.

Busch and Ashley walked the neighborhood where the group home is located, knocking on doors, talking to nearby residents, several who did not know of Schmidt's impending release. They spoke directly to the owners of the home and told them of the mounting anger of the local populace. Ashley and fellow Riverside County Supervisor Jeff Stone introduced legislation to tighten residency requirements at group homes. The Riverside County District Attorney's office threw in its support of keeping Schmidt out of the county.

The efforts worked. The group home revoked its invitation, Mayor Busch told a group of about 50 concerned Perris residents and parents who gathered this week at the Perris Senior Center.

"They came to realize they would be in trouble if they took this person in," Busch said. "Local elected officials, County Supervisors and state representatives hit the ground running on this matter. When all those forces rally together you can't beat it."

Several parents who attended this week's meeting expressed relief that Schmidt will not be living in Riverside County and praised City and County efforts that prevented his arrival.

In the wake of the Schmidt case, Riverside County Supervisors approved ordinances that placed a moratorium on new group homes in unincorporated areas, placed new restrictions on where sex offenders can reside and created a system to notify residents when one is released to their neighborhood. Ashley said that while county officials have limited options in restricting the release of sexual offenders, he believes the new ordinances will strengthen public safety.

"This is one bad man," he said. "He is the worst kind of sexual predator."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch answers a question from the audience during a meeting to address citizens concerns about the proposed release of a convicted murderer to a group home near Perris. Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley looks on.



Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley reads the criminal complaint detailing the crimes committed by David Schmidt in 1988..