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Title: Bill would keep violent video games from kids

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AURORA — State Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia, D-Aurora, introduced a bill Monday that would make it harder for children to buy violent or sexually explicit video games.

The move comes three months after Gov. Rod Blagojevich launched a campaign against graphic video games, which included a Naperville press conference where he promised families he'd create a law that would ban retailers from selling or renting those games to minors.

Under the Violent Video Games Law, which was also introduced Monday in the state Senate by Sen. Deanna Demuzio, D-Carlinville, anyone who sells "inappropriate" video games to kids under 18 will face up to one year in prison or a \$5,000 fine.

The law would also require sexually explicit and violent games to carry a special label and stores to put up signs that explain the video game rating system. Retailers would face a \$1,000 fine for failing to label the games or post signs.

Chapa LaVia, who has previously spoken out about the dangers of certain video games, said she felt strongly about supporting the Governor's bill because many busy parents don't know what "disturbing materials" their children are buying.

"I have two children of my own, and I know the situation," she said Monday. "We really need to get out there and get a little bit more tough. We can never be careful enough with our children."

Although Chapa LaVia said she has heard critics say the legislation would infringe their First Amendment rights, she believes most of her constituents would support the bill. The bill, she said, is comparable to the "parental advisory" stickers on explicit music CDs or movie rules that ban minors from seeing rated-R films without a parent.

The Violent Video Games Law would still allow parents to buy games of any rating for their children. If it passes, Illinois will be the first state to have such a law.

"As parents and legislators, it is our duty to look out for the safety and well-being of our state's children and families," Chapa LaVia said.