



May 18, 2005

Reps. Clarify Bill

A letter to the editor appearing in the May 6 Tribune completely misrepresented the safer online dating bills we proudly sponsored this session. The bills that were filed have never required that an online dating company conduct a criminal background check.

The writer overlooks the most important fact: This is about protecting the safety of Florida's citizens, who deserve to know whether the online dating service they are using does or does not conduct criminal background checks. It's as simple as that.

A staggering number of online dating site users wrongly assume that background checks are conducted when, in reality, few online dating services choose to do so. This legislation attempts to protect Floridians from a false sense of security in thinking that most online dating firms take reasonable steps to ensure that convicted felons and sex offenders are not able to communicate with them.

We acknowledge that not all background checks are foolproof, but they certainly add a single layer of protection. That is why businesses and government agencies across our state conduct such checks on potential employees. Our bills encourage consumers not to be overly reliant on the checks - but to use them as just one measure in practicing safe dating.

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This story can be found at: <http://www.tampatrib.com/News/MGBJK8HRU8E.html>