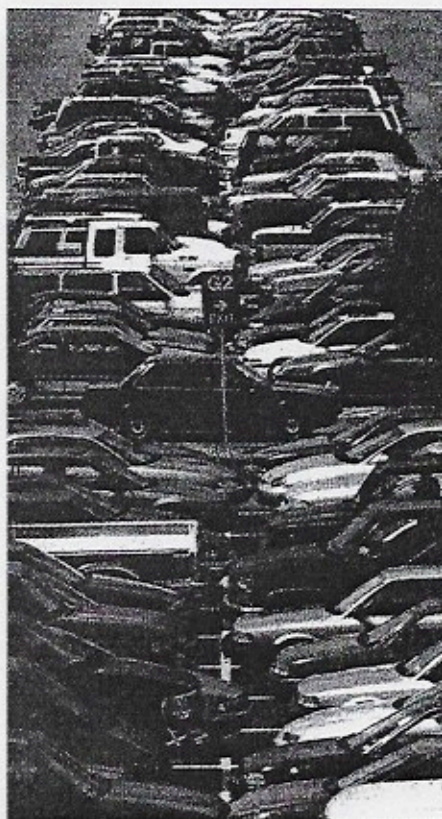




Photos by BOB LEVERONE/Staff

International Airport.



river scours the daily lot for a space at Charlotte/Douglas International Airport.

## r as British envoy

tor of the Office of Management and Budget, deputy White House chief of staff, and most recently as SBA director. The London job had been eyed by Anne Hunt, the philanthropist daughter of oil billionaire H.L. Hunt and a former Democratic Party donor. Now ambassador to Austria, she announced Wednesday that she'll leave in the fall to

Please see **AMBASSADOR** / page 17A



Lader



SUAREZ/Associated Press

## Prosecutors yield trial stage to McVeigh's defense team

By **TOM KENWORTHY**  
Washington Post

**DENVER** — Just 18 days after they began, government prosecutors Wednesday concluded their lean and emotionally riveting case against Oklahoma City bombing suspect Timothy McVeigh, who faces the death penalty if he is found guilty of the April 1995 bombing.

"Your honor, on behalf of the United States, I am

ardous rescue effort that followed and the grim task of identifying the 168 people who died in the blast.

Today, McVeigh's defense team begins what many legal observers believe is an uphill struggle to shred the prosecution's case.

Prosecutors contend that McVeigh, out of an escalating hatred for the federal government, rented a truck, packed it with a 4,000-pound homemade bomb and

Staff Writer

Three years and three killings after many residents began calling for one, it appears Charlotte will create a panel of citizens to review police conduct.

A bipartisan City Council committee on Wednesday unanimously approved sweeping changes in how allegations of police misconduct are handled. The full council is expected to pass the changes June 9. Two citizens would participate in the Police Department's internal investigations, and an 11-member board would review complaints about the department's decisions.

The board would hear four types of cases: shots fired by an officer that injured or killed someone; excessive use of force; unbecoming conduct; and inappropriate arrest and search and seizure.

None of the changes, though, give citizens final authority in dis-

continue to rest with Police Chief Dennis Nowicki and City Manager Pam Syfert.

"While some (residents in the black community) may not be pleased, I am pleased that we have taken a step in the right direction toward bridging the gap of community relations," said council member Patrick Cannon, who has spearheaded the effort. "Before, we had nothing. Now we at least have something."

Many Charlotte residents, especially African Americans, have been demanding citizen involvement since 1993, when Windy Gail Thompson, who was black, was killed by white Officer Mark Farmer after he pulled her over on suspicion of drunken driving. Thompson, who was unarmed, drove away with Farmer hanging

Please see **BOARD** / page 14A

## Senate broadens sex offender list

### N.C. House next stop for measure

By **FOON RHEE**  
and **KATHLEEN MCCLAIN**  
Staff Writers

**RALEIGH** — Suspicious that a strange man down the street might be a child molester?

Checking him out could soon be as easy as looking at a statewide list. Or logging on to your home computer.

The N.C. Senate voted 47-0 Wednesday to start a statewide registry of convicted sex offenders, open it to the public and post the list — with photos — on the Internet.

The bill would extend the registration requirement to people who abduct children. It would create a second list of sexual predators whose whereabouts would have to be verified by law enforcement officials every 90 days until a judge decides they're no longer a danger. And it would push the penalty for offenders who don't sign up from a misdemeanor to a felony.

"It makes our law much stronger and offers more protection," said Sen. Fountain Odum, D-Mecklenburg, the bill's main sponsor. "It's not a cure-all. It's a big step in the right direction."

The bill, which would take effect April 1, is also expected to pass the House; Gov. Jim Hunt plans to sign it.

The Senate has already passed a budget that includes \$673,000 more a year to hire 21 probation-parole officers to supervise the registered sex offenders.

North Carolina has required sex offenders to register with their local sheriffs since January 1996. More than 95 percent of sex offenders released from prison have registered as they're supposed to: 1,199 so far, 105 of them in Mecklenburg County.

People convicted of rape, incest

Please see **REGISTRY** / page 17A

## Index

Business	1D	Landers	7E
Classified	7C	Local	1C
Comics	6E	Movies	5E
Deaths	5C	Outdoors	8B
Editorial	18A	Sports	1B
Garden	1E	TV	4E
Horoscopes	6E	Weather	2C
How to contact The Observer	2A		

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## Access also expanded in Senate measure

### REGISTRY

Continued from page 1A

and sex offenses involving children are required to sign up and give their addresses, driver's license numbers, photos and fingerprints.

But those lists are kept county by county, and the countywide lists are available only to schools and groups that work with children, the disabled and the elderly. Individuals must go to the sheriff with the name of someone they suspect.

The new proposal would make the registry far more accessible.

With a written request and check for copying and mailing fees, anyone could get the entire list for their county — or for the entire state. The state Justice Department also plans to put the list on its computer Web site.

Odom said making the information easier to get will let people "exercise their own protection for their neighborhoods and their families."

"It's not punishment as much as the ability to be vigilant," he said.

Child advocate Larry King of Charlotte welcomed improvement in the way officials track sex offenders, but wondered how long a conviction's stigma would stick.

An offender could ask a judge to lift the registry requirement after 10 years if the person hasn't been convicted of another sex offense.

"I believe the public has a right to know when dangerous predators are living in their communities," said King, director of the Council for Children. "But how you distinguish between a dangerous predator and someone who has successfully completed treatment brings questions to my mind."

Chris Teat, director of Charlotte's Family Center, cheered the provision for making offenders' names available to anyone who asks. Without it, she said, children are at greater risk from repeat offenders.

Rita Smith, a Transylvania County child-victim investigator, said the bill should cover crimes committed before the existing law took effect in January 1996.

"I don't think making the list public is the answer," Smith said. "I think making the law retroactive is the answer."

Such a provision might have spared two McDowell County girls, ages 12 and 13, who police say were raped by a man with 1994 convictions on two counts of third-degree sexual contact. Frederick Marine, who was not required to register, was charged last month in the McDowell County cases.

All 50 states have enacted laws requiring sex offenders to register with authorities.

In South Carolina, February statistics showed 2,263 registered offenders. Legislators altered the S.C. law last year to allow sheriffs to release offenders' names on request.

### KEEPING TABS

Here's a summary of the new N.C. sex offender registration proposal:

#### Sex offenders

**Covers:** People convicted of crimes against children or a sexually violent offense such as rape.

**Registration information:** Address, physical description, details of case, photograph, fingerprints.

**Public access:** With a written request, all information except victims' names.

**Term:** Registration ends after 10 years if person not convicted of another sex offense.

#### Sexually violent predators

**Covers:** People convicted of sexually violent offenses who are determined by experts to have a mental disorder that makes them likely to repeat crime against strangers.

**Registration information:** Address, physical description, details of case, photograph, fingerprints, history of other convictions, documentation of any treatment.

**Public access:** Same as registry for other sex offenders.

**Term:** Registration continues until person determined to no longer be a danger. A person can ask a court to end requirement after 10 years if they have no other convictions.

SOURCE: Senate Bill 676

A federal database, mandated last year to track some 250,000 convicted sex offenders, is still being compiled.

People checking offender lists might be surprised by what they find, some skeptics predict. They might discover people they know — not strangers who threaten their children. And even though victims' names are supposed to remain private, those involving family members won't be too hard to figure out.

"It will have unintended consequences," said Deborah Ross, director of the American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina.

"It's another high-profile attempt to deal with the problem," Ross added. "The question is: Is this going to protect the kids?"

Her answer: no. Ross said the state could do much more to protect children by improving treatment for sex offenders and by helping families at risk of sexual abuse.

Odom agreed that such programs are part of the solution. But he added: "It is also clear that violent sex offenders are the most difficult to treat."

The proposed law would also keep the state in good graces with the federal government so it can keep \$1.5 million in crime-fighting funds. It complies with the federal Megan's Law, named after a 7-year-old New Jersey girl who was raped and murdered in 1993. A twice-convicted child molester living on the same block is on trial in that case.

But some legislators say that the new law isn't tough enough, that sex offenders shouldn't be released from prison at all.

Said Sen. Dan Page, R-Harnett: "I think we simply need to put them behind bars and keep them there. Communities would be much safer."

## Clinton may want

### AMBASSADOR

Continued from page 1A

teach at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

That helped pave the way for Lader, long a Democratic Party loyalist.

This week the Clinton administration is filling several key diplomatic posts with career diplomats, but according to tradition is filling the most coveted posts — such as London — with political appointees.

A graduate of Duke University and Harvard Law School, Lader led Winthrop University from 1983 to 1985.

Winthrop Professor Bert Bobb, who was the president's assistant at the time, said Lader's strengths are ideally suited to a diplomatic post.

"He has to be able to ease into it, important," day. "He has to be able to sit down and

When Lader took the post, members were tags. He took recalls, but "Once he's together, he's forever."

Lader left S.C. government close race in primary to Miller on to lose to

Lader also started the ends at Hill 1980s, and

CLOCKS CANDLESTICKS FRAMED ARTWORK

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TABLE & FLOOR LAMPS

CHINA ACCESSORIES CHANDELIER

BRITISH TRADITIONS FURNITURE

ACCENT LAMPS

SILK PLANTS

CRYSTAL

FRAMED ARTWORK

MIRRORS

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