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Moms Stand Against Pedophile

Scores of concerned local mothers are expected to pack a Chatsworth courtroom today in support of lawyers seeking to bar an admitted pedophile returning to Santa Clarita.

Representatives of parent groups, Girl Scout troops and child care centers, as well as abuse victims and mothers, told The Signal they plan to stand shoulder to shoulder with lawyers attending Los Angeles Superior Court in Chatsworth on Friday seeking an injunction against self-proclaimed pedophile Jack McClellan.

At issue is whether or not the lawyers can take legal action to stop McClellan from coming to Santa Clarita and photographing young girls in public places with the intent of posting those images on a Web site that serves pedophiles.

"We're going to have a lot of bodies in the courtroom down there," said lawyer Richard Patterson, who filed the injunction on behalf of children in Santa Clarita on Tuesday with fellow lawyer Anthony D. Zinnanti.

"It's reassuring to see that this is a community that doesn't tolerate this kind of thinking," Patterson said about McClellan's repeated claims in the media that he is a pedophile who likes to watch and photograph young girls.

McClellan, 45, who has not been charged with a crime, came to Santa Clarita on June 9 to watch young girls at a bowling alley and at the San Fernando Valley Fair. On Monday, he told The Signal that he likes to watch pre-pubescent girls at such events and plans to return to Santa Clarita when the weather cools.

On Tuesday, Patterson and Zinnanti filed their injunction and, on Wednesday, called on concerned mothers to join them in court as a show of support.

They have since been inundated with mothers responding to their plea.

"I think it's going to be a huge response," said Gail Ortiz, spokeswoman for the city of Santa Clarita and a mother. "I'm not surprised that Santa Clarita would step up. And, I'm not

surprised that when it comes to something that is just not right, that they would want to make it right."

One of the many women expected in court Friday is local mother Lena Smyth, 34, who launched an anti-Jack Web site Thursday called Mothers Against Sexual Predators of California, modeled after the group which drove McClellan out of Washington state.

"This is a sister group of the Mothers Against Sexual Predators of Washington," she said. "They're the moms who got Jack McClellan run out of their state."

The Web site, www.maspofcalifornia.org, is intended to educate parents on how to protect their children and to advocate legal change promoting child safety.

It's appropriate the injunction and the Web site get under way on the same week, Smyth said, adding: "I will be there in court and with several other moms."

Santa Clarita mother Stacy Miller, 43, is vice president of the Child Care Resource Center, which educates more than 600 child care workers responsible for more than 25,000 children in three areas - the Santa Clarita Valley, Palmdale and San Fernando Valley.

"It's a frightening situation for all the children in our community," she said about McClellan and his promise to return to Santa Clarita. "We take our role very seriously and we want to make sure our child care workers know what's going on."

"I am planning on being there," she said about today's court date. "I've had a number of calls of concern from people asking 'What can we do?'"

Newhall Girl Scout leader and mother of two, Michelle, 33, who asked that her full name not be used, said she plans on attending as well.

On Thursday, she began circulating a petition among friends and fellow Girl Scout leaders endorsing the injunction to bar McClellan's

return to Santa Clarita.

"I want to show my support as a mom," she said. "I'm starting a petition and trying to get as many moms as I can to be counted. So that even if they can't get to the courthouse at least their names will be there."