Video Game Ban

By Leah Williams

Illinois has become the first state to keep video games with adult content away from young children.

On July 25, 2005, Governor Rod Blagojevich signed a new law that barred stores from selling or renting extremely violent games to minors. Anyone who violates this rule could be fined up to $1,000. Stores will also be required to have labels on their games with content ratings. Signs explaining the rating system also must be displayed.

Since the Columbine school shootings in 1999, government officials and lawmakers have been trying to curb the exposure of the violent material. The video game industry had been trying to fight the new law, citing free speech in a federal court lawsuit to block the legislation from passing. The industry argues that the government cannot restrict the sale of non-obscene games, just like it is forbidden to impose limitations on books or music.

Blagojevich's office said the law should be able to hold up in court because it responds to new research that shows a link between certain video games and violent behavior.

"Parents don't need government to raise their kids. That's their job," Blagojevich said in a statement.

Similar measures have been proposed in other states but they ultimately were rejected by the states' courts.