House votes to ban school beeper use

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The Louisiana House said no to drug dealers — even if they are youngsters — who use beepers on school grounds to get their instructions on dealing drugs.

Students are often used as couriers for drug dealers in big cities. The youngsters carry paging devices to get their instructions.

Several lawmakers argued Thursday against the bill, SB143 by Sen. Cleo Fields, D-Baton Rouge.

Opponents argued that a prominent man could come on campus carrying his office beeper and get arrested and jailed.


"You're almost going to the ridiculous — to talk about someone visiting a school campus with a beeper and going to jail," Jetson said.

People coming on a school campus in most cases must check in at the principal's office, where he can be told of the beeper prohibition, Jetson said.

The only people who will be affected by the bill, said Rep. Sherman Copelin, D-New Orleans, are those drug dealers who carry the beepers on campus.

The bill was passed by a 62-30 vote and sent to the governor for his signature.

As finally passed, the bill prohibits possession of the devices unless authorized by the principal.

It establishes possession of beepers as a grounds for disciplinary action by the principal, including suspension or referral to a juvenile court.

For an adult, anyone other than a student or school employee can be jailed for as much as 30 days or fined as much as $100, or both.