



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Secretary of State Jesse White Says Kansas Manhunt is Good Reason to Remind Students of the #1 School Bus Safety Lesson: "Stay Away From Strangers"**

**SPRINGFIELD** — A Kansas manhunt has prompted Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White to repeat his warnings to school children that they need to stay away from strangers.

As part of his comprehensive program for school bus safety education, Secretary White instructs children to stay away from strangers. If a stranger should approach a child while the child is en route to the school bus stop or while waiting for the bus, the child should report the incident to the school bus driver as soon as the bus arrives.

The Wichita, Kansas, Police Department recently launched an extensive manhunt to find suspects who have been trying to lure children at school bus stops in Wichita. Although no child was abducted, at last three incidents have occurred there in September.

"The first lesson in child safety is to stay away from strangers," Secretary White warned. "All across Illinois, when we teach children the importance of school bus safety, we stress the avoidance of strangers.

"If a child is accosted by a stranger while waiting for the school bus, that child should tell the school bus driver immediately when the bus arrives."

White said that virtually all Illinois school buses are equipped with communications equipment that enables the driver to immediately notify authorities of potential kidnap attempts.

"When a child is unsure of what a stranger is, we simply tell the child that a stranger is a grownup who's name you don't know."

Secretary White's nationally-acclaimed Toby Tire school bus safety program was one of the first in the nation to warn children to stay away from strangers when it was launched in 1999.