

# South Tahoe faces lawsuit over sex offender law

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe's sex offender ordinance is being challenged by a group that is filing complaints and lawsuits throughout the state.

Janice Bellucci, president of California Reform Sex Offender Laws, believes the city's ordinance violates state and federal laws.

"The underlying court case just came out in January and is still out on appeal," South Lake Tahoe City Attorney Tom Watson told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The fact is the decision they are relying is from the court of appeals and is being appealed to the Supreme Court and there is no decision from the Supreme Court yet."

As of April 2, Watson had not seen the actual lawsuit, but said he was made aware a complaint had been filed. He will likely bring the issue before the City Council in closed session at the April 15 meeting.

South Lake Tahoe's ordinance prohibits registered sex offenders from residing or being within 300 feet of a slew of public and private locations including schools, parks, bus stops and swimming pools.

"The sex offender ordinance adopted by the city of South Lake Tahoe violates both the federal and state constitutions," Bellucci said in a statement. "The South Lake Tahoe ordinance is based upon two myths: (1) that registered citizens have a high rate of re-offense and (2) that strangers commit most sexual assaults."

El Dorado County in January altered its ordinance following a legal challenge.