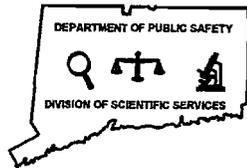




STATE OF CONNECTICUT



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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Rep. Michael P. Lawlor, Co-Chairman
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Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

February 23, 2007

HB 7086 AAC REGISTRATION OF SEXUAL OFFENDERS

The Department of Public Safety supports this bill.

The State of Connecticut has just over 4,486 registered sex offenders that are living, working or attending school in the state. The Department of Public Safety registered 355 newly registered sex offenders during the 2006 calendar year and processed over 14,000 address verification letters to registrants.

Since the enactment of Public Act 06-187, President Bush signed the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act into law. The Walsh Act is based on a tier system with registrants being designated as a Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III offenders based on the sexual offense they were convicted of. Connecticut is required to adopt the mandates of the Walsh Act by July of 2009 or risk loss of ten percent of the funds allocated for that year to the state under the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. The U.S Attorney General's Office has not yet released the federal guidelines to aid in the implementation of the act.

A number of the requirements of the Walsh Act that do not require the release of the Attorney General's guidelines for implementation have been included into Raised Bill 7086. These requirements include: the inclusion of palm prints and work locations during registration, a requirement for a copy of a motor vehicle operator's license or identification issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles to be included in the registration process and a listing of all vehicles owned or operated by registrants.

The Walsh Act also calls for a study of risk-based offender classification systems to include an analysis of the various types of systems, the methods and assessment tools available, the efficiency and effectiveness of these systems and the resources necessary to implement these systems. The Department of Public Safety believes that a temporary suspension of the current Risk Assessment Board, developed under Public Act 06-187, would be a prudent course of action pending the release of this study from the U.S. Attorney General.

Raised Bill 7086 requires the establishment of two additional classifications of registrants: those that commit predatory sexual offense against a victim who is a minor and those that commit predatory sexual offense against a protected or other person. These classifications are intended to identify individuals who prey on the most vulnerable victims in our society: the children, the elderly and those who are generally not capable of protecting themselves. The latter group would include the blind, the physically disabled, pregnant women, persons with mental disabilities or any other individuals who the court determines were victims of a predatory manner.

This bill also seeks to address two issues that were identified in a 2006 survey by the U.S. Department of Justice as top concerns by registry officials throughout the country: homelessness amongst registrants and prosecution of out of state offenders. In Connecticut we have approximately 70 registrants that claim to be homeless, a status that clearly puts them at greater risk of re-offense than registrants with stable housing. Current legislation has no provisions for the Department of Public Safety to address this growing population. Raised Bill 7086 would provide for homeless or transient registrants to maintain their registrations while continuing to notify the Department of Public Safety, local law enforcement and the public of their whereabouts.

The second critical issue addressed in this bill deals with the prosecution of out of state offenders who fail to notify the Department of Public Safety when they arrive in the state. Current legislation requires the registrant to notify the Sex Offender Registry Unit of the state without undue delay upon residing in the state. Most states throughout the country have similar requirements allowing for a registrant to make the appropriate notification within five to ten days. Where these statutes fail is when a registered sex offender moves into the state and chooses not to make the required notification. Investigators are then required to attempt to gather evidence of the registrant's whereabouts for the past five days that is very often impossible to do. It is estimated that nationally there are as many as 100,000 registered sex offenders that are not in compliance and whose whereabouts are unknown. The provisions in this bill would require registrants to notify the Department of Public Safety in writing forty-eight hours prior to entering the state. Out of state registrants located in this state without such prior notification would be subject to arrest.

This proposed legislation expands on the scope of Public Act 02-7, which required registrants to report employment or enrollment at an educational institution. The proposal adds a number of educational institutions to the list requiring registrant reporting and includes other institutions where children are likely to be found without their parents being present. The proposal requires reporting if the registrant is employed, carries on a vocation or is a student at a youth camp, a child day care service, public or private educational institutions including but not limited to elementary, middle, high schools, regional vocational technical schools, charter schools, or secondary schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leonard C. Boyle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Leonard C. Boyle
COMMISSIONER
Department of Public Safety