

SB 517 – An Act Concerning Senior Safety Zones...

First of all I'd like to thank you for allowing me to testify before you today regarding SB 517. I'd also like to applaud the sponsors of this bill. As I turn 65 this year, I look forward to joining my fellow seniors and alas, collecting social security...As a future senior I support the intentions of the committee to ensure senior safety.

During my 22 year tenure with the Department of Corrections, thirteen of which I served as Warden at three Adult Male Facilities, I worked extensively with sex offenders. My professional training and experience has provided the insight of knowing that laws, lines, and signs will not deter sexual offenders.

Although, well intended SB517 appears to be the product of an illusionary understanding of how criminals response to the law; I fear it could ultimately lull seniors into a false sense of security, and not provide the intended protection.

In taking the time to contact rape crisis centers and women advocacy organizations, I learned there was no data on reported incidents.

Bigger question still...How does one identify a sex offender? What might those "obvious" traits be...ages, race, clothing, and hygiene appearance...Once detected, would seniors be expected to detain suspects until police arrived to run them through the Sex Offender Data Base? What if the suspect isn't on the sex offender registry? Do you simply just say sorry for the inconvenience?

Your "self defense strategy" should never be left to signs and lines. There are many effective devices and free training available to enhance personal safety.

I am in favor of seniors empowering themselves by learning tactics to escape, evade, and discourage confrontation of any attacker. Whether home, shopping, or at senior centers.

In closing, please consider my concerns and suggestions regarding SB 517.