



State of Connecticut

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Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director Office of Chief Public Defender

Raised Bill No. 5449

An Act Concerning Residency Restrictions for Registered Sexual Offenders Judiciary Committee Public Hearing - March 12, 2014

The Office of Chief Public Defender opposes *Raised Bill No. 5449, An Act Concerning Residency Restrictions for Registered Sexual Offenders*. This bill creates a new class A misdemeanor which would restrict a person who is required to register as a sex offender from residing within **1000 feet** of a school or day care. This bill is similar to legislation proposed in previous legislative sessions. (See R.B 6643 in 2011; R.B. 5486 in 2010; and, R.B. 5503 in 2007).

Passage of this bill would make it difficult, if not impossible for any sex offender to reside within his/her community if in an urban area. The establishment of such a restriction can only result in sex offenders moving from within an urban area, where there exists an increased number of schools and daycares, to a rural area. Evidence is lacking that such residency restrictions really provide public safety. Iowa's experience with residency restrictions enacted there showed that sex offenders were living in their automobiles and using the local convenience store address as their own when registering as a sex offender. The higher cost of owning or renting a home in a rural area has also resulted in some sex offenders not registering and simply disappearing. In those areas where there is less of a law enforcement presence, law enforcement has experienced difficulty in keeping track of sex offenders.

And while this bill prohibits a registered sex offender from living within the one thousand foot area, it has no prohibition against a sex offender from being employed or visiting within the restricted area. Lastly, if a sex offender is unable to be released to live outside of the 1000 foot area, it is likely that some may be denied parole. As a result, the sex offender will serve his/her sentence and then be released without any supervision in the community. As a result, the bill, if passed would provide merely a false sense of security and not enhanced public safety as the drafters may intend. The Office of Chief Public Defender urges this Committee to take no action on this bill.