

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**



**HOUSE DEMOCRATS OFFICE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4100
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06108-1591**

Testimony by:
Rep. Emmett Riley, 46th District
Rep. Kevin Ryan, 139th District

**SB 1087: An Act Concerning Sexual Offender Registration Laws, Residency
Restrictions for Registered Sexual Offenders and Reentry Housing**

March 16, 2015

Chairman Coleman, Chairman Tong, honorable members of the Judiciary Committee,

We are in strong support of SB 1087, An Act Concerning Sexual Offender Registration Laws, Residency Restrictions for Registered Sexual Offenders and Reentry Housing.

Senior citizens and children are two of the most vulnerable populations when it comes to sexual assault. In the years between 2009 and 2013 sexual assaults of people over 60 years of age was at 1.3 percent. With the state senior citizen population projected to grow about 57 percent by 2040, it is possible that more senior citizens will be at risk of sexual assault. In order to ensure the protection of this population, providing more information to the public will only help. This information will better the effort to deter and prevent sexual assault on both children and senior citizens. Not only should more information be available but there should also be a focus on community protection.

Last year we passed a bill (which is now Special Act No. 14-20) which created a task force to study the creation of senior safety zones. The task force was to look at, among other things, data on sex offenders who prey on senior citizens, and to look at ways to limit the movement of sex offenders without affecting their constitutional rights. Members of a community should be alerted when a registered sex offender moves into their community, not find out months later when something could have happened.

The Senior Safety Zone Task Force submitted their findings at the beginning of 2015. To highlight a few of their recommendations: they suggest providing education to law enforcement so they can properly notify senior centers when a sex offender has moved into the area, and exploring a modification to the sex offender registry to include a tiered system which would help officers and the public better understand the risk of the offender to the public.

We owe it to our most vulnerable citizens, the seniors, to protect them. We should be responsible for keeping sexual offenders away from areas where seniors congregate or reside so that they feel safe. Special Act No. 14-20 was an important first step, but we now to go a step further and take the task force's recommendations and bring them to light.

Again, we urge your support on this bill and we thank you for your time and consideration to this important matter.