

File No. 647

(Reprint of File No. 398)

Substitute House Bill No. 5747
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
April 30, 1998

AN ACT CONCERNING SEXUAL OFFENDERS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of
Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (a) The Office of Adult
2 Probation, in conjunction with state-wide experts
3 in law enforcement, the treatment of sexual
4 offenders and sexual assault victim services,
5 shall, within available appropriations, develop a
6 community response education program to be offered
7 to neighborhoods and municipalities that have been
8 notified pursuant to section 54-102r of the
9 general statutes, as amended, that a person who
10 has registered under said section is or will be
11 residing in that community.

12 (b) The purpose of such program shall be to
13 assist neighborhoods, parents and children to
14 learn how to better protect themselves from sexual
15 abuse and sexual assault. The program shall
16 develop educational materials and community
17 information resources on prevention and risk
18 reduction concerning sexual abuse and sexual
19 assault and the enforcement of requirements
20 concerning the registration and supervision of
21 sexual offenders and the notification of
22 communities where such offenders reside.

23 (c) The program may include the following:

24 (1) An initial community meeting following a
25 community notification, sponsored by the Office of
26 Adult Probation and held in conjunction with the
27 chief of police, chief elected officials, the
28 superintendent of schools and other municipal
29 officials of the community, to discuss the
30 implementation of the statutory requirements
31 concerning the registration of a sexual offender
32 and the notification of the community where such
33 offender resides, to provide information on the
34 crime or crimes involved and to provide
35 information on how the offender will be monitored
36 by the Office of Adult Probation and the specific
37 conditions of probation applicable to the
38 offender;

39 (2) Information on how and where concerned
40 residents may report observed violations by an
41 offender of the conditions of such offender's
42 probation;

43 (3) Resources to educate families and children
44 in the prevention and avoidance of sexual abuse
45 and sexual assault and for parents seeking
46 supportive methods for discussing relevant issues
47 with their children;

48 (4) Resources on when and how a community may
49 wish to establish a network of "Safe Houses" for
50 neighborhood children to use when they seek safe
51 shelter or the creation of a neighborhood block
52 watch or crime watch;

53 (5) Resources for police departments and
54 boards of education to use in consulting with
55 parents on appropriate school-based classroom
56 programs stressing safety, prevention and risk
57 reduction and to use in developing educational
58 programs for parents to discuss relevant issues
59 with their children;

60 (6) Compilation and distribution of a list of
61 child protective agencies, child guidance clinics
62 and rape crisis centers for families seeking more
63 in-depth counselling after a community
64 notification has occurred.

65 (d) The Office of Adult Probation may apply
66 for and receive grants from the federal government
67 or any agency thereof or from any foundation,
68 corporation, association or individual for
69 purposes of the development of the community
70 response education program under this section.

71 Sec. 2. This act shall take effect from its
72 passage.

* * * * *

"THE FOLLOWING FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND BILL ANALYSIS ARE PREPARED FOR THE BENEFIT OF MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SOLELY FOR PURPOSES OF INFORMATION, SUMMARIZATION AND EXPLANATION AND DO NOT REPRESENT THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OR EITHER HOUSE THEREOF FOR ANY PURPOSE."

* * * * *

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT - BILL NUMBER SHB 5747

STATE IMPACT See Explanation Below

MUNICIPAL IMPACT See Explanation Below

STATE AGENCY(S) Judicial Department

EXPLANATION OF ESTIMATES:

STATE AND MUNICIPAL IMPACT: The bill requires the Office of Adult Probation to develop a community response education program including educational materials and community information resources. The program could, but is not required to, include initial community meetings following sex offender community notifications, resources to educate families in the prevention and avoidance of sexual abuse, resources for various parties to develop educational programs for parents and resources on how communities can establish "safe houses" for neighborhood children. Effective implementation of these provisions would likely require the targeting of specific staff resources on an on-going basis, and expenses, with a resulting cost of \$25,000 - \$75,000. Since the bill requires that the program be implemented within available appropriations, these costs would be diverted from other programs depending on the extent to which the bill is intensively administered.

It is estimated that the following number of sex offenders will be released on probation and be subject to sex offender notification requirements in the next three years: 1998: 133; 1999: 155; and 2000:107.

It is anticipated that any cost incurred by a

municipality in order to be involved in this program would be minimal and absorbable.

House "A" deleted a reference to the 24-hour hot line operated by the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. and did not result in a fiscal impact.

* * * * *

OLR AMENDED BILL ANALYSIS

SHB 5747 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING SEXUAL OFFENDERS

SUMMARY: This bill requires the Office of Adult Probation to develop a community response education program to be available to assist neighborhoods and towns that have been notified that a registered sex offender is living in their community. The office must consult with statewide experts in law enforcement, sex offender treatment, and sexual assault victims services in developing the program.

The bill delineates the program's purpose and scope, describes component parts, and deals with funding.

*House Amendment "A" deletes a provision specifying that a 24-hour hot line operated by the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. or another operator be designated for people to report offender probation violations and that other emergency numbers be posted.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Passage

FURTHER EXPLANATION

Purpose and Scope

The program is to help parents and children learn how to better protect themselves from sexual assault and abuse. The office must develop educational materials and community information resources on prevention of sexual assault and abuse and enforcement of the law's sex offender registration, supervision, and notification requirements.

Program Components

The bill allows the program to include a number of specific components. These include an initial community meeting following notification of the presence of a registered sex offender in the community, sponsored by the Office of Adult Probation with participation by local police, elected officials, school superintendents, and other municipal officials. The meeting can provide information about the offender, his conditions of probation, and how the office will monitor him.

Community members can be told how and where to report observed violations of the offender's probation. Resources can be provided to parents about how to prevent and avoid sexual abuse, discuss these issues with their children, and establish a "safe house" network or a neighborhood block or crime watch.

The office can provide resources to police and schools to use in consultation with parents in classroom programs stressing safety, risk reduction, and prevention. It can also provide a list of child protective agencies, child guidance clinics, and rape crisis centers for families looking for more in-depth counseling after a notification has occurred.

Funding

The bill authorizes the office to apply for and use federal grants or private corporation or foundation money to pay for developing the program. But the bill also requires the office to establish this program within available appropriations.

BACKGROUND

Sex Offender Registration Law and Bill

By law, people convicted of certain serious sex crimes must be registered with the local police or resident state trooper for 10 years after they are released from prison, probation, or parole. Information about registered offenders is public information, but the law contains no provisions either authorizing or forbidding community notification.

Related Bill

sSB 65 (File 420), favorably reported by the Judiciary Committee and passed by the Senate with Senate Amendments "A" and "B", expands the number of crimes requiring registration. It essentially conforms Connecticut's law to federal law, and specifically authorizes the police to notify the public about registered offenders when they believe it is necessary to protect the public.

Legislative History

On April 7 the House referred the bill (File 398) to the Education Committee, which favorably reported it without change on April 15. On April 17 the bill was referred to the Planning and Development Committee, which favorably reported it without change on April 20. On April 22 the House referred the bill to the Appropriations Committee, which favorably reported it unchanged on April 23.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 39 Nay 0

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 27 Nay 0

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 17 Nay 0

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 39 Nay 0