

HB 2606 with HCA 1 -- SEX OFFENDERS

SPONSOR: Anderson

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness by a vote of 9 to 1.

This bill specifies that no school bus stop for students attending any public school, as defined in Section 160.011, RSMo, or any private school giving instruction in a grade or grades not higher than twelfth grade, can be placed within 500 feet of the residence of an individual required to register as a sexual offender.

If the public or private school is unable to find an alternative bus stop due to safety reasons, these provisions do not apply, and the public or private school must notify the parent or parents of students that use such bus stop that a sexual offender lives within 500 feet of such bus stop.

HCA #1: This amendment establishes that the provisions of the bill do not apply when the bus stop is placed at the student's residence. In such a case, the public or private school will not be required to notify the parent or parents of the student that uses such bus stop that a sexual offender lives within 500 feet of such bus stop.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that we want to make sure our students are protected. They are already protected at schools, so they should be protected at their bus stops, too. No parent should have to risk putting his or her child in harm's way, and not all parents are fortunate enough to be able to wait with their kids at the stop until the bus arrives.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Anderson; Jeffrey Ziegelmann; and Darin Chappell.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that this sex offender registry includes people who are not pedophiles or violent sex offenders, and laws that tighten the grip around sex offenders limit non-violent and non-pedophile offenders' rights. These individuals should not have to suffer when they do not pose a threat to children. Asking schools to move their bus stops is not the answer, and it would do nothing to improve child safety. The recidivism rate is not as high as people would like us to believe, and a lot of sexual offenses happen within the family and by others who have access to kids, such as teachers and coaches.

Testifying against the bill were Vicki Henry, Women Against

Registry; and Joe W. Navarro.