



Support Increased Penalties and Oversight for Sexual Offenders and Predators

Florida Sheriffs support the Senate and the House for championing this issue and making sure Florida has the laws needed to keep our children safe and hold sex offenders accountable. They support the provisions found in these bills, primarily allowing the multidisciplinary team to confer with law enforcement, tolling provisions, and allowing sheriffs to make referrals to the Sexually Violent Predator Program. The Florida Sheriffs have advocated for the issues below, which are included in the strike-all amendment to SB 528:

Transient sexual offender and predator reporting requirements: The transient sexual offender and predator population can be very difficult for sheriffs' offices to track. Transient sexual offenders/predators must report any changes in residence within 48 hours to a sheriff's office. This amendment requires transient sexual offenders and predators to update the sheriff's office monthly with a list of his or her most recent "transient resident addresses." The amendment also creates a third degree felony for those offenders or predators who fail to report every 30 days

Issuing warrants for sexual offender and predators who fail to register: Certain counties have had difficulty moving forward with the prosecution of released sexual predators and sexual offenders who claim intention to establish residence in a particular county upon release from incarceration and do not subsequently register in that county of intended residence or any other. While current law allows certain counties to issue a warrant for a sexual predator or offender who does not register in any Florida county after release from DOC, there is no systematic issuance of warrants for these offenders, creating a "loophole" in that certain sexual predators or offenders do not register, and do not have a warrant issued for their failure to register. This amendment allows additional counties to issue a warrant.

Address verification of sexual offender and predators under DOC community supervision: In a recent case from St. Lucie County, a defense attorney argued that current statutes do not allow sheriffs' offices to voluntarily check addresses of sex offenders on DOC probation. Sheriffs' offices currently conduct these checks to ensure public safety. Current statute does not explicitly prohibit them from doing so. The judge in the case advised that there could be potential problems with the law without an explicit declaration of authority. This amendment grants discretionary authority to local law enforcement to conduct address verifications of ANY sex offender or predator, whether under DOC supervision or not.

Immediate registration of vehicles and updates to registration: A sexual offender or predator's vehicle information should be kept up to date. This amendment requires that any changes in the vehicle or driver related information required by statute, or vehicle procurement or loss be reported to the sheriff's office within 48 hours.

Support additional safeguards in the strike-all amendment to SB 528

