

HCS HB 572 -- SEXUAL OFFENDERS

SPONSOR: Swan

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill prohibits sexual offenders from being present or loitering within 500 feet of any museum with the primary purpose of entertaining or educating children under 18 years of age.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this adds a few locations to bridge the gap in statute regarding locations with the primary purpose of entertaining or educating children.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Swan.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that for registered offenders to reintegrate, they need a job, a place to live, and a support group. If offenders are not allowed to go to certain places with their children, they will not be able to be part of their family. An organization called "Stop It Now" does a great job teaching parents and students about how to recognize certain behavior and how to stop it in advance. Only 7% of child abusers are strangers; most are known to the victims, so this kind of legislation would not stop that from happening. Many abusers are not the same people they were when they offended.

Testifying against the bill was Vicki Henry, Women Against Registry.