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VALLEE FILES BILL TARGETING SEX OFFENDERS

Bill safeguards children by prohibiting sex offenders from working with minors

(BOSTON)- Representative James E. Vallee (*D – Franklin*) is targeting dangerous, high-risk sex offenders with a piece of legislation designed to further minimize their contact with children. *An Act Prohibiting Persons Convicted of Certain Sex Offenses from Child Care Service* prohibits convicted sex offenders in Massachusetts from working with minors, adding to the available tools already in place to target sexual predators in the Commonwealth.

According to statistics compiled by the U.S Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics, convicted rape and sexual assault offenders serving time in state prisons across the country report that two-thirds of their victims were under the age of 18, and nearly 4 in 10 imprisoned violent sex offenders said their victims were aged 12 or younger.

“These statistics are staggering,” said Vallee. “My intention with this bill is to ensure that Massachusetts children, and their parents, have the necessary information to maintain their safety from sexual predators.”

Vallee’s bill prohibits any level 2 or 3 sex offender, those deemed by the Sex Offender Registry Board to be of highest risk to re-offend, from working in any capacity that involves the care, instruction or guidance of minor children. These jobs include, but are not limited to, teachers, coaches, counselors, day caregivers, scout troop leaders or school administrators of any type.

“This bill addresses a crucial public safety issue,” Vallee said. “As former Chairman of the Criminal Justice Committee, I know how dangerous sex offenders are to the people in Massachusetts, particularly to our children,” Vallee continued.

“One of the reasons that sex offenders are so dangerous is that we do not always know where these predators are. This legislation ensures that they are not working closely with our children,” Vallee said. “It will certainly make it more difficult for sex offenders to camouflage themselves.”

In addition to the restrictions placed on level 2 and 3 offenders, Vallee's proposal calls for these individuals to supply prospective employers with information about their convictions and designations when applying for work or volunteer positions. Under the bill's provisions, conviction and sex offender classification information of level 2 and 3 offenders must be supplied when applying for initial teacher certification as well.

The bill is modeled after a similar New Hampshire statute and is another push from Vallee to get Massachusetts in the vanguard of states that very stringently monitor sex offenders. The bill comes in addition to House bill 1751, a sex offender omnibus bill Vallee filed with bipartisan support in the Legislature. H. 1751, *An Act Relative to Sex Offenders*, requires offenders to be classified before their release from prison and increases the penalties for failing to register to as much as lifetime parole for level 3 offenders. The bill also calls for an intensive parole program that will closely monitor all offenders residing in the Commonwealth, and clearly defines "address" so that offenders can be located wherever they reside.

Vallee's most recent bill serves as an addition to the proposals already put forward by the legislator to combat offenders in the Commonwealth. "This bill addresses the safety of Massachusetts' children," Vallee said. "That is always a fundamental issue for us as legislators, parents, and citizens."

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