



Representative Monica Robb Blasdel

Ohio's 79th House District

Representative D.J. Swearingen

Ohio's 89th House District

House Bill 289 Sponsor Testimony

[BLASDEL]

Chair Abrams, Vice-Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 141. This bill has the support of the Attorney General office, and it amends sections of the Revised Code regarding SORN law compliance as well as adding a new sexually oriented offense to ensure that all those who have violated the trust of the community receive equal justice. I will address the SORN law compliance changes, and my colleague, Representative Swearingen, will address the proposal to add a sexually oriented offense.

According to the Attorney General's office, there are nearly 500 noncompliant offenders in Ohio today. As the law currently stands, if an offender's registration is

marked non-compliant, the time they are required to be on the registry continues to tick down. For instance, registered sex offenders are required by law to register their home address. If the offender moves addresses and does not update their address, they are in non-compliance. However, if the offender spends virtually all their time on the registry in non-compliance, he or she can still be removed from the registry when their registration period expires.

This legislation tolls the amount of time that an offender is in noncompliance, pausing the clock until the individual's information is accurate. Thus, where an offender was required to be on the registry for 10 years regardless of the accuracy of their information, they now must be on the registry for 10 years with current, up-to-date information. This honors the original intent of the registry, ensuring that community members are aware of the presence of sex offenders in their area.

I will now let my Rep. Swearingen explain the proposed addition of a sexually oriented offense.

[SWEARINGEN]

Chair Abrams, Vice-Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee— The legislation also makes disseminating

matter harmful to juveniles a sexually oriented offense and a person who violates the offense a Tier I sex offender/child-victim offender. Often, individuals charged with the felony offenses of Pandering Obscenity or Importuning will plea down to a charge of “Disseminating Material Harmful to Juveniles.” Though the two crimes result from similar fact patterns, Disseminating Material Harmful to Juveniles does not carry a sex offender registration requirement. This legislation changes that, ensuring that all who have violated the community’s trust receive equal justice. This legislation has bipartisan support and makes Ohio safer, ensuring those who take advantage of the most vulnerable are held accountable.