

Pa. seeks more scrutiny for sex offenders

Damon C. Williams Tribune Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, September 25, 2014 2:29 pm

The House Judiciary Committee has approved a measure to extend mandatory supervision of serious sex offenders after their release.

“I authored this legislation to protect the public while these offenders are making the adjustment from incarceration to freedom,” the bill’s prime sponsor, State Rep. Ron Marsico (R-Dauphin) said. “There have been too many incidences where a sex offender leaves prison and immediately commits the same or similar crime as the one he or she was convicted of previously. It’s a public safety issue, and I’m going to do everything I can to prevent these heinous crimes from occurring.”

Marsico said his legislation closes a loophole in how serious sex offenders are tracked after release from prison, noting inmates who are released from prison because they have served the maximum sentence imposed by the court are not normally subject to any supervision by state parole or the court.

“Even if paroled before maxing out, the period of parole supervision may be short, depending on how close to their maximum term they were released,” Marsico said in a memo circulated to capital peers.

In the memo, Marsico noted data from the Pennsylvania Sentencing Commission shows sex offenders are the most likely inmates to serve the full maximum term or close to it before being released. The reason for this is they have refused to take responsibility for their crimes or have failed to cooperate with treatment and other rehabilitation programs.

“These people pose a serious risk to public safety when they are released back into the community without a level of supervision to monitor their transition,” Marsico said. “To address this problem, [my] legislation will require the court to impose a mandatory three-year probation period consecutive to any term of total confinement for a person convicted of a Tier III sex offense under Pennsylvania’s Adam Walsh Act.

“Under existing law, the court will have the flexibility to order supervision by the PA Board of Probation



State Rep. Rob Kauffman, shown here partaking in recent Breast Cancer Awareness campaign.

State Rep. Rob Kauffman participates in a recent Breast Cancer Awareness campaign. — Photo courtesy the Facebook page of State Rep. Rob Kauffman

and Parole, or county probation. If a person is paroled and adequately adjusts to freedom under parole supervision, current law would permit the court to modify or even terminate probation supervision.”

The bill now heads to the state Senate for a concurrence vote in that chamber, it is part of a bigger parcel of related bills passed recently by the judiciary committee.