

SB

216



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

Senate

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Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 216

"An Act Providing for the Civil Commitment of Sexual Predators"

In the past we have been powerless to prevent the release from custody of dangerous sexual predators who have not been rehabilitated and are almost assured to re-offend. Now, thanks to a recent United States Supreme Court ruling (*Kansas v. Hendricks*), we have the ability to employ another tool to help protect our citizens from society's most heinous sexual predators. SB 216 would provide the tool -- which meets constitutional requirements -- to keep some of the worst sexual predators off the streets. This will help us prevent future sexual assaults, and the destroyed lives which often result.

Arizona, Kansas, Minnesota, New Jersey, Washington, Wisconsin and Illinois are among the states that have already enacted civil commitment laws. SB 216 is modeled after Kansas' statute, which has been upheld by the highest court of the land. The experience in the other states is that this provision has been used sparingly, and only in the case of some of the very worst repeat sexual offenders who are determined likely to re-offend.

SB 216 will allow the state to confine the most serious sexual predators, such as pedophiles who, as statistics show, have a recidivism rate of over 85%. Civil commitment could only be accomplished following a civil trial, in which the court or jury finds that a person is a sexually violent predator using the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard.

This small group of dangerous sexual offenders pose a real threat, particularly to the women and children of our state. SB 216 would provide a tool to prevent our most vulnerable citizens from being further terrorized by these known sexual predators.