

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/SB 524 — Sexually Violent Predators

by Appropriations Committee; and Senators Sobel and Detert

The bill (Chapter 2014-3, L.O.F.) creates the “Protecting Our Children and Adults from Sexual Predators Act.” The purpose of the bill is to improve the assessment of sex offenders for possible civil commitment as sexually violent predators and to improve public notification of the location of sexual offenders and predators.

The bill revises the operations of the five member multidisciplinary team within the Department of Children and Families that determine whether the sex offender meets the definition of a sexually violent predator. Specifically, the bill requires the department to train team members, provide feedback to team members, and create a process for measuring the performance of team members.

To develop the clinical assessments for consideration by the multidisciplinary team, the department contracts with psychiatrists and psychologists. The bill limits such contracts to one-year terms, but allows the contracts to be renewed. The bill requires the department to evaluate the contractors based on performance each year. This will allow the department to replace contractors who are performing poorly.

The bill requires the department to recommend that the state attorney file a petition for civil commitment when two or more members of the multidisciplinary team determine that the person meets the definition of a sexually violent predator. Currently, the multidisciplinary team makes recommendations based on a consensus among the team members.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement maintains a web site and toll-free telephone number to provide information to the public on the location and offenses of sex offenders and predators. The bill requires public and private colleges and universities to inform students and employees about the website and the toll-free number to improve public safety on higher education campuses.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2014.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 118-0