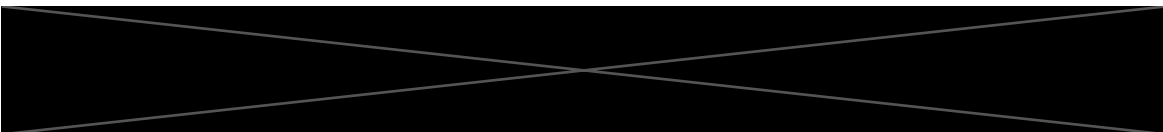




BILL WOULD ADD THOSE WHO 'MALICIOUSLY WOUND' CHILDREN TO VIRGINIA SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

by Amy David | Feb 9, 2016 | POLITICS



RICHMOND – A Hanover County mother, whose son suffered brain damage and other injuries when he was abused by a man in 2010, urged state lawmakers Monday to expand who must be listed on Virginia's Sex Offender

and Crimes against Minors Registry. A legislative subcommittee appeared receptive to the idea.

Courtney Maddox told the panel about her son Elijah's harrowing ordeal: "My son suffered a brain injury, a stroke and was left paralyzed and with two broken legs" after he was abused by a family friend. The abuser was convicted and sentenced to eight years in prison. But under the state's current laws, his name won't be on the public registry when he is released.

That is why Maddox is pushing for House Bill 672, also known as Eli's Law. It would add malicious wounding (if the victim is under 13 and the perpetrator is an adult) to the crimes that require offenders to be listed on the registry.

"I think that common sense tells you that if you're going to take an infant child and bash its brain in, then you're going to be pretty likely to commit some other type of crime later. I think public notice is the minimum that we would expect in certain circumstances such as that," said the bill's sponsor, Del. Christopher Peace, R-Mechanicsville.

Peace and Maddox spoke Monday to the Criminal Law Subcommittee of the House Courts of Justice Committee.

When her son nearly died, Maddox explained, she looked into whether the assailant would be listed on the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry. However, under the existing law, the registry lists only offenders who have murdered children or been convicted of certain sex crimes. So Maddox reached out to Peace and the commonwealth's attorney for Hanover County.

"We came up with a solution that we believe will help our community – Eli's Law," she said.

"Here I am fighting, and I believe that the public needs to be made aware of those that commit violent crimes against children. I know it's going to make the public more aware of those who are violent around us. We're better able and equipped to determine who we can trust and who we can't trust around our children. That's the important thing. It's not just sex offenders that hurt our children."

At the meeting, the Criminal Law Subcommittee tabled HB 672 – but lawmakers were sympathetic to the issue. There were two other bills that also sought changes in the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry:

- HB 604, which would include in the registry the crimes of "receiving money for procuring a person for prostitution" and "receiving money from the earnings of a person engaged in prostitution" if they involve a minor. This bill was sponsored by Del. Robert Bell, R-Charlottesville.

· HB 177, which would list on the registry “any person convicted of having carnal knowledge of a brute animal.” This bill was filed by Del. David Albo, R-Springfield.

The subcommittee tabled both Eli’s Law and HB 604 but decided to fold their intentions into Albo’s bill. The panel then voted 10-1 in favor of HB 177.

The subcommittee recommended that the amended HB 177 be sent to the House Appropriations Committee for further consideration. State officials estimate it would cost \$50,000 to expand the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry.

Steve Royalty, senior assistant commonwealth’s attorney in Hanover County, testified in support of Eli’s Law at the subcommittee hearing.

“In a nutshell, it would protect children from becoming victims of criminal offenders by helping to suspend such individuals from being allowed to work directly with children,” Royalty said.

“If that person is on a registry, it becomes a matter of public record, so to speak, and people in the public have access to that registry. They will know in a way that they may not have known before that this person has engaged in a very violent crime against a child.”

Though Eli is too young to understand what happened to him, his mother promised him that something good would come of the traumatic events.

“I tell him he’s a hero,” Maddox said. “And he is.”

Only six months after the abuse, Eli took his first steps. Now 5 years old, Eli has some weakness in his left arm and a scar on his head, but his mother is extremely grateful that he is no longer paralyzed.

Maddox is optimistic that the House Appropriations Committee will endorse the concept of Eli’s Law. “It’s \$50,000 – a small price for such an impactful cause.”



AMY DAVID

Amy David was the Web Editor for RVAMag.com from May 2015 until September 2018. She covered craft beer, food, music, art and more. She's been

a journalist since 2010 and attended Radford University. She enjoys dogs, beer, tacos, and Bob's Burgers references.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE RVAMAG NEWSLETTER

Email Address *

SUBSCRIBE

MORE IN POLITICS

I WENT TO THE DATA CENTER TOWN HALL AT STUDIO TWO THREE

SALON DE RÉSISTANCE | INTO THE WOOD CHIPPER

VIRGINIA HEMP BUSINESSES SUE, CLAIM NEW THC LAW WIPES OUT MILLIONS IN INVESTMENTS

OPINION | IT'S TIME TO RETHINK PRIMARIES

FAR-RIGHT "REMIGRATION" PROPAGANDA TARGETS BHATTI CAMPAIGN

VIRGINIA'S NEW MARIJUANA LAW: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

THE STRANGE AFTERLIFE OF VIRGINIA'S PRESIDENT HEADS

BLÖTHAR: "GWAR DIDN'T CHANGE. THE WORLD FREAKIN CHANGED."

Topics: [child abuse](#), [GA 2016](#), [Sex Offender and Crimes against Minors Registry](#)