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**SENATE BILL 5578**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senator Pearson

AN ACT Relating to the release of sex offender information; and amending RCW 4.24.550.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 4.24.550 and 2015 c 261 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) In addition to the disclosure under subsection (5) of this section, public agencies are authorized to release information to the public regarding sex offenders and kidnapping offenders when the agency determines that disclosure of the information is relevant and necessary to protect the public and counteract the danger created by the particular offender. This authorization applies to information regarding: (a) Any person adjudicated or convicted of a sex offense as defined in RCW 9A.44.128 or a kidnapping offense as defined by RCW 9A.44.128; (b) any person under the jurisdiction of the indeterminate sentence review board as the result of a sex offense or kidnapping offense; (c) any person committed as a sexually violent predator under chapter 71.09 RCW or as a sexual psychopath under chapter 71.06 RCW; (d) any person found not guilty of a sex offense or kidnapping offense by reason of insanity under chapter 10.77 RCW; and (e) any person found incompetent to stand trial for a sex offense or kidnapping offense and subsequently committed under chapter 71.05 or 71.34 RCW.

(2) Except for the information specifically required under subsection (5) of this section, the extent of the public disclosure of relevant and necessary information shall be rationally related to: (a) The level of risk posed by the offender to the community; (b) the locations where the offender resides, expects to reside, or is regularly found; and (c) the needs of the affected community members for information to enhance their individual and collective safety.

(3) Except for the information specifically required under subsection (5) of this section, local law enforcement agencies shall consider the following guidelines in determining the extent of a public disclosure made under this section: (a) For offenders classified as risk level I, the agency shall share information with other appropriate law enforcement agencies and any individual who requests information and, if the offender is a student, the public or private school regulated under Title 28A RCW or chapter 72.40 RCW which the offender is attending, or planning to attend. The agency may disclose, upon request, relevant, necessary, and accurate information to any victim or witness to the offense((~~,~~)) and any individual community member who lives near the residence where the offender resides, expects to reside, or is regularly found((~~, and any individual who requests information regarding a specific offender~~)); (b) for offenders classified as risk level II, the agency may also disclose relevant, necessary, and accurate information to public and private schools, child day care centers, family day care providers, public libraries, businesses and organizations that serve primarily children, women, or vulnerable adults, and neighbors and community groups near the residence where the offender resides, expects to reside, or is regularly found; (c) for offenders classified as risk level III, the agency may also disclose relevant, necessary, and accurate information to the public at large; and (d) because more localized notification is not feasible and homeless and transient offenders may present unique risks to the community, the agency may also disclose relevant, necessary, and accurate information to the public at large for offenders registered as homeless or transient.

(4) The county sheriff with whom an offender classified as risk level III is registered shall release a sex offender community notification that conforms to the guidelines established under RCW 4.24.5501.

(5)(a) When funded by federal grants or other sources, the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs shall create and maintain a statewide registered kidnapping and sex offender web site, which shall be available to the public. The web site shall post all level III and level II registered sex offenders, level I registered sex offenders only during the time they are out of compliance with registration requirements under RCW 9A.44.130 or if lacking a fixed residence as provided in RCW 9A.44.130, and all registered kidnapping offenders in the state of Washington.

(i) For level III offenders, the web site shall contain, but is not limited to, the registered sex offender's name, relevant criminal convictions, address by hundred block, physical description, and photograph. The web site shall provide mapping capabilities that display the sex offender's address by hundred block on a map. The web site shall allow citizens to search for registered sex offenders within the state of Washington by county, city, zip code, last name, and address by hundred block.

(ii) For level II offenders, and level I sex offenders during the time they are out of compliance with registration requirements under RCW 9A.44.130, the web site shall contain, but is not limited to, the same information and functionality as described in (a)(i) of this subsection, provided that it is permissible under state and federal law. If it is not permissible, the web site shall be limited to the information and functionality that is permissible under state and federal law.

(iii) For kidnapping offenders, the web site shall contain, but is not limited to, the same information and functionality as described in (a)(i) of this subsection, provided that it is permissible under state and federal law. If it is not permissible, the web site shall be limited to the information and functionality that is permissible under state and federal law.

(b) Law enforcement agencies must provide information requested by the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs to administer the statewide registered kidnapping and sex offender web site.

(c)(i) Within five business days of the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs receiving any public record request under chapter 42.56 RCW for sex offender and kidnapping offender information, records or web site data it holds or maintains pursuant to this section or a unified sex offender registry, the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs shall refer the requester in writing to the appropriate law enforcement agency or agencies for submission of such a request. The Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs shall have no further obligation under chapter 42.56 RCW for responding to such a request.

(ii) This ((~~subparagraph~~)) subsection (5)(c) of this section is remedial and applies retroactively.

(6)(a) Law enforcement agencies responsible for the registration and dissemination of information regarding offenders required to register under RCW 9A.44.130 shall assign a risk level classification to all offenders after consideration of: (i) Any available risk level classifications provided by the department of corrections, the department of social and health services, and the indeterminate sentence review board; (ii) the agency's own application of a sex offender risk assessment tool; and (iii) other information and aggravating or mitigating factors known to the agency and deemed rationally related to the risk posed by the offender to the community at large.

(b) A sex offender shall be classified as a risk level I if his or her risk assessment and other information or factors deemed relevant by the law enforcement agency indicate he or she is at a low risk to sexually reoffend within the community at large. A sex offender shall be classified as a risk level II if his or her risk assessment and other information or factors deemed relevant by the law enforcement agency indicate he or she is at a moderate risk to sexually reoffend within the community at large. A sex offender shall be classified as a risk level III if his or her risk assessment and other information or factors deemed relevant by the law enforcement agency indicate he or she is at a high risk to sexually reoffend within the community at large.

(c) The agency shall make a good faith effort to notify the public and residents within a reasonable period of time after the offender registers with the agency.

(d) Agencies may develop a process to allow an offender to petition for review of the offender's assigned risk level classification. The timing, frequency, and process for review are at the sole discretion of the agency.

(7) An appointed or elected public official, public employee, or public agency as defined in RCW 4.24.470, or units of local government and its employees, as provided in RCW 36.28A.010, are immune from civil liability for damages for any discretionary risk level classification decisions or release of relevant and necessary information, unless it is shown that the official, employee, or agency acted with gross negligence or in bad faith. The immunity in this section applies to risk level classification decisions and the release of relevant and necessary information regarding any individual for whom disclosure is authorized. The decision of a law enforcement agency or official to classify an offender to a risk level other than the one assigned by the department of corrections, the department of social and health services, or the indeterminate sentence review board, or the release of any relevant and necessary information based on that different classification shall not, by itself, be considered gross negligence or bad faith. The immunity provided under this section applies to the release of relevant and necessary information to other public officials, public employees, or public agencies, and to the general public.

(8) Except as may otherwise be provided by law, nothing in this section shall impose any liability upon a public official, public employee, or public agency for failing to release information authorized under this section.

(9) Nothing in this section implies that information regarding persons designated in subsection (1) of this section is confidential except as may otherwise be provided by law.

(10) When a law enforcement agency or official classifies an offender differently than the offender is classified by the end of sentence review committee at the time of the offender's release from confinement, the law enforcement agency or official shall notify the end of sentence review committee and the Washington state patrol and submit its reasons supporting the change in classification.

(11) As used in this section, "law enforcement agency" means a general authority Washington law enforcement agency as defined in RCW 10.93.020.

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