

Committee told law on sex offenders needs change

By L. Kent Wolgamott

Nebraska's methods of identifying and treating sexual offenders should be changed, according to witnesses appearing before the Nebraska Legislature's Judiciary Committee Friday.

The committee is studying the establishment of a research program on "deviant sexual behavior," LR207, proposed by Sen. Herb Duis of Gothenburg.

Differentiation should be made between violent sex crime offenders, such as those convicted of sexual assault and the minor, more innocuous crimes such as exhibitionism, witnesses said.

William Stone, clinical psychologist at the Lincoln Regional Center, said that contrary to the wording of the resolution, "most sex offenses are minor and don't

draw much attention." Stone also said sex offenders do not follow a progression from the minor sex crimes to violent attacks.

Violent crimes

The assumption that such a progression exists is based on the records of those arrested for violent crimes, he said, which show a large number of minor sex crimes arrests.

Stone said the records only demonstrated that "people who commit serious offenses don't have any qualms about committing minor ones" and that violent sex crimes offenders have "a disregard for other human beings that most people don't have."

Gina Washburn, coordinator of the Lincoln Rape Crisis Center, told the committee they should re-examine sex crime laws and treatment and should establish:

- A statewide program with emphasis on areas outside Lincoln and Omaha;
- A provision for "nuance offenders" not only those convicted of sexual assault;
- Family and peer group therapy.

Treatment programs

She said the committee also should explore graduated releases for offenders, follow-ups on offenders in the community and establishment of community programs to enable the convicted offenders to adapt to society.

James Allison, research psychologist for the medical services division of the Department of Public Institutions, discussed three new treatment programs; family therapy, psychiatric treatment of adolescents prone to violence, and chemical therapy with an experimental West German drug.

The adolescent treatment program is possible because "all authorities agree that sexual violence usually begins in early adolescence" and decreases by age 35, he said.

Possible sex crime offenders can be identified because they usually are involved in other types of violent crimes.

Chemical castration

The proposed drug, cyproterone acetate, now is used in Europe and functions as a form of chemical castration,

Allison said.

Washburn opposed the use of the drug as a cruel method which did not address the problem because rapists "use the penis as a weapon" and if treated by the drug, they "will use anything available."

Nebraska's sexual sociopath law was criticized by Lancaster County Deputy Public Defender Rodney Rehm and by a man convicted under the law, through an open letter read by Washburn.

Being confined indefinitely under the law "is like being in the bottom of society's garbage can with little or no hope of crawling out," the inmate wrote.

Left in limbo

He said the law has no provision for those convicted to prove themselves in society, and with doctors afraid to put their reputations on the line and certify an offender as cured, those convicted under the law are left in limbo.

"Are we patients or prisoners?" he asked.

Rehm said the state "ought to just do away with the law" or amend it to make it fair.

The law should be amended to call for unanimous jury determinations of whether a person is a sexual sociopath, he said, rather than being determined by the judge.

There are nine sexual sociopaths or psychopaths (convicted under an earlier law) now at the Lincoln Regional Center, according to Joyce Page, psychiatric social worker at the regional center.

They range in age from 23 to 65 years and have spent from 1½ years to 6½ years at the regional center, she said.

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short stuff

The Student Y is sponsoring a group talk on male/female relationships at 11:30 a.m. today in the Nebraska Union. Room number will be posted.

The Teaching and Learning Center is sponsoring a lecture by William Perry on "The Meanings Students Create" at 3:30 p.m. today in the Nebraska Union Centennial Room.

Need help in accounting? Beta Alpha Psi is sponsoring an accounting lab today in CBA 120 from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. and in CBA 123 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Beta Alpha Psi members will be available to answer any questions you may have on accounting material.

The UNL Table Tennis Club will meet from 7 p.m.

to 10 p.m. in the Nebraska Union conference rooms.

The Undergraduate Sociology Association will meet Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. in Oldfather Hall 722 and at 3:30 p.m. in Oldfather 707.

The Circle K club will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the Nebraska Union. Room number will be posted.

The Student Dietetic Association will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday in Home Economics Building 25.

The UNL Gay Action Group is sponsoring a candidates' night for legislative candidates at 8 p.m. Tuesday in UMHE Commonplace, 333 N. 14th.

The Student Y is sponsoring a running group at 5 p.m. Wednesday in Nebraska Union 117.

The University Program Council-East will meet at 6 p.m. Wednesday in the east union.

The UNL Pre-Vet club will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday in Veterinary Basic Science Building 151.

The American Society of Civil Engineers will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the union. Room number will be posted. The featured speaker will be Chuck Larson of Peter Kiewit and Sons Co.

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Of course, all employees at the National Security Agency have certain things in common: they are civilian employees of the Department of Defense; they are engaged in technical projects vital to our nation's communications security or a foreign intelligence production mission; and they all enjoy the benefits that accompany Federal employment. However, the differences between our career opportunities are just as interesting as their similarities. For example...

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TO THE COMPUTER SCIENTIST (BS MS): It means applying his or her knowledge in a wide range of sub-disciplines such as systems design, systems programming, operating systems, computer applications analysis, and retrieval systems.

TO THE MATHEMATICIAN (MS): A career means defining, formulating, and solving complex communications-related problems. Statistical mathematics, matrix algebra and combinatorial analysis are just a few of the tools applied by the NSA mathematician.

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