

Senate Judiciary Committee

Matthew Schelzi 271-3266

HB 1214, relative to establishing a committee to study best practices for the development of a restorative justice model for misdemeanor-level behavior and hate crimes committed by juveniles under the age of eighteen.

Hearing Date: April 16, 2024

Time Opened: 1:37 p.m.

Time Closed: 1:46 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Carson, Gannon, Abbas, Whitley and Chandley

Members of the Committee Absent: None

Bill Analysis: This bill establishes a committee to study best practices for the development of a restorative justice model for misdemeanor-level behavior and hate crimes committed by juveniles under the age of eighteen

Sponsors:

Rep. Selig

Rep. Gregg

Rep. Harriott-Gathright

Rep. Wheeler

Rep. M. Perez

Rep. Newell

Rep. Kenney

Rep. Tenczar

Sen. Whitley

Sen. Perkins Kwoka

Who supports the bill: Rep. Selig, Rep. Roy, Rep. Rhodes, Rep. Meuse, Emily Lawrence (Waypoint), Haley Demers, Janet Lucas, Dawn McKinney (NH Legal Assistance), Claudia Damon, Dorothea Vecchiotti, Susan Moore, Ruth Perencevich, Louise Spencer, Lyn Lindpaintner, Maura Willing, Maureen Ellermann, Jeanne Torpey, Maxine Petruccelli, Charles Petruccelli, Elizabeth Mower, Laura Sokoloski, Denise Clark, Jonathan Davis, Nancy Brennan, Andrew Jones, Gary Devore, Alfrieda Englund, Karen Mitchell, Richard DeMark, Phil Hatcher, S. Blanchard, Mallory Goudin, and David Holt.

Who opposes the bill: Julie Smith, Emmanuel Krasner, Daniel Richardson.

Who is neutral on the bill: None.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Loren Selig said this bill would establish a short-term study committee, made up of one senator and four members of the House, that would look at juveniles who commit misdemeanors with the focus on hate crimes, and look at

restorative justice models for those juveniles. She noted there are teen courts in Maryland that have had great success, and that inspired her to introduce this bill. She said the number of hate crimes have been increasing in the state. She said a lot of young people are very impressionable and young people can make poor choices that involve partaking in hate crimes without fully understanding the implication. She noted because of introducing this bill, she has been sent reprehensible emails. She said this committee will look to break the cycle of hate crimes and identify ways to get young people into help.

Senator Whitley asked her to explain what the term restorative justice means.

Rep. Selig said restorative justice can take many different forms, but it allows people to see why they have taken the actions they have and have a program to make the person whole. Someone might go to an anger management class, take a history course, or other options. She said the range of hate crimes which are happening are broad and there are differences as to how people are being punished. She said these programs may have a hefty price tag at the beginning, but prevent future incarceration.

Senator Carson said this past weekend the NH GOP convention had cars keyed. She asked if these individuals turn out to be minors would she see restorative justice as the consequences for them.

Rep. Selig said absolutely, and hate crimes are not a partisan issue. If they were minors, they should have talks in an appropriate way to discuss their frustrations with the political system through letter writing, testimony, or running for office themselves, rather than actions that damage property.

Senator Abbas asked if this program would apply to hate crimes that rise to a felony.

Rep. Selig said she is unsure, but if that type of legislation came out of the study committee, she would not be opposed to getting to that point.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None.

Neutral Information Presented: None.