



INDIANA PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Steven L. Owen Reports Impact of Sentence Modification on Victims

(Indianapolis – January 20, 2015) Floyd County Chief Deputy Prosecutor Steven L. Owen offered testimony before the Indiana Senate Corrections and Criminal Law Committee recently concerning Senate Bill 174 that provides additional opportunities for sentence modification for some offenders.

Owen told the committee that in Floyd County, there have been no petitions for sentence modification from non-violent offenders; only defendants who have lengthy criminal sentences are taking advantage of the new statute and that tends to be the "worst of the worst" criminals.

Owen testified that, "Violent offenders, such as child molesters, rapists, and murderers don't deserve a statutory break to modify their sentences. The sentence modification process mandates that the prosecutor 'shall' notify the victim of the modification hearing. So, regardless if their sentences are modified, the process itself 're-victimizes' the victims of those violent crimes."

Chief Deputy Owen gave the committee examples from Floyd County of violent criminal cases where the offender has sought modification of their sentence. The examples illustrate his opposition to modification of sentences in some circumstances for violent criminal offenders such as those convicted of murder, rape and child molestation:

- A 1997 child molest case wherein the offender molested three 10-year-olds. The victims, tracked down 20 years later, were shocked to learn their perpetrator might be getting out of jail.
- A 1990 attempted murder case wherein a domestic violence victim was with inches of losing her life; that offender – who would have remained in jail for another 12 years - was successful in his sentence modification petition and was released from jail on January 12.
- A 1985 case wherein an offender raped, stabbed and left an 18 year-old girl for dead along I-64. That victim attended the hearing with Owen and addressed the Senate committee about her renewed fears about this offender being released from prison.

Senate Bill 174 passed in the Committee by a vote of 9-0.

- End -

About the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council: The IPAC is a non-partisan, independent state judicial branch agency that supports Indiana's 91 prosecuting attorneys and their chief deputies. It is governed by a 10-member board of directors of elected prosecuting attorneys. The IPAC assists prosecuting attorneys in the preparation of manuals, legal research and training seminars. It serves as a liaison to local, state, and federal agencies, study commissions, and community groups in an effort to support law enforcement and promote the fair administration of justice.

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