

Rep. Elik's Bill Protecting Student Victims From Abuse Passes House

by Joe Pritchett
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SPRINGFIELD - [House Bill 4241](#), sponsored by State Representative Amy Elik (R-Alton), passed the House unanimously today. This bill amends the Sex Offenses Article of the Criminal Code and ensures that school employees who commit acts of sexual conduct or sexual penetration with a student, regardless of the student's age, are held responsible.

The legislation protects students who are between 18 and 23 years of age against acts of sexual conduct or sexual abuse by an educator or school staff member. Abuse by an educator or authority figure involving sexual conduct is a Class A misdemeanor for the first offense and a Class 4 felony for a second or subsequent offense or if there is more

than one victim. For acts of sexual penetration, Class 3 and 4 felony charges are applicable. In addition, consent of the victim is not a defense to abuse committed by an educator or authority figure.

“The General Assembly has made great strides in recent years to protect students from sexual abuse in schools,” stated Rep. Elik. “However, we have unfinished work related to the protection of students ages 18 and over. Whether it’s an 18-year-old senior in high school, or a student with disabilities who stays in high school a little bit longer, we have a duty to make sure these students are not the victims of sexual exploitation.”

“This bill is very narrowly-tailored, and we worked diligently in committee on the language through two amendments,” Rep. Elik added. “I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who worked with me to get this important legislation passed.”

The bill now moves to the Senate for further consideration.

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