

# U.S. Rep. Sensenbrenner: Statement at Markup of the Adam Walsh Reauthorization Act

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 22, 2017

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner delivered the following remarks during the House Judiciary Committee’s markup of H.R. 1188, the Adam Walsh Reauthorization Act of 2017, legislation reintroduced by Congressman Sensenbrenner earlier this year. Watch the statement [here](#).

The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, enacted in 2006, is landmark legislation intended to keep our communities, and most importantly our children, safe from sex offenders and other dangerous predators.

This bipartisan bill strengthened sex offender registry requirements and enforcement, extended federal registry requirements to Indian tribes, and authorized funding for several programs intended to address and deter child exploitation.

The centerpiece of the Adam Walsh Act is the national Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act, or SORNA [SORE-NA]. SORNA’s goal is to create a seamless national sex offender registry to assist law enforcement’s efforts to detect and track offenders. SORNA provides minimum standards for state sex offender registries, and created the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Website, which allows law enforcement officials and the general public to search for sex offenders nationwide from just one website.

H.R. 1188, the Adam Walsh Reauthorization Act of 2017, reauthorizes two key programs from the original Adam Walsh Act – grants to the states and other

jurisdictions to implement the Adam Walsh Act's sex offender registry requirements, and funding for the U.S. Marshals' to locate and apprehend sex offenders who violate registration requirements. Specifically, the bill authorizes not less than \$60 million annually through fiscal year 2021, which is consistent with recent appropriations. These programs are crucial to efforts to complete, and enforce, the national network of sex offender registries, particularly in light of the already-passed deadline for the states to come into compliance with SORNA.

Based on feedback from the states, H.R. 1188 makes targeted changes to the SORNA sex offender registry requirements. The bill changes the period of time after which juveniles adjudicated delinquent can petition to be removed from the sex offender registry for a clean record from 25 years to 15 years, and provides that juveniles do not need to be included on publicly-viewed sex offender registries. Instead, it is sufficient for juveniles to be included on registries that are only viewed by law enforcement entities. I believe these provisions strike an appropriate balance between being tough on juveniles who commit serious sex crimes and understanding that there can be differences between adult and juvenile offenders.

The bill also recognizes the unique challenges that tribes face in implementing SORNA. H.R. 1188 provides technical assistance to tribes so they can access, and enter information into, the federal criminal information databases. Finally, H.R. 1188 amends the statute of limitations to allow individuals who were victims of exploitation or trafficking as juveniles to have 10 years after becoming an adult to file suit for a civil remedy. It is my hope that with these common sense changes, more states will come into compliance.

The Adam Walsh Act has already been a public safety success. To date, the Justice Department has deemed 128 jurisdictions substantially compliant with the SORNA requirements, including 108 tribes and 3 territories. This legislation is critical because despite ongoing prevention efforts, the fight against child exploitation is not over.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and I yield back the balance of my time.