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PRESS RELEASE

Edwardsville – The Illinois House of Representatives has unanimously passed legislation limiting the number of good conduct credit days prisoners convicted of attempting to commit terrorism can earn.

House Bill 5121, introduced by Illinois State Rep. Dan Beiser (D-Alton) at the request of Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons, would require prisoners convicted of attempting to commit terrorism to serve at least 85% of their sentence as opposed to the 50% required under current law.

“As State's Attorney, it is my job to prosecute criminals for their crimes and to address loopholes which may allow them to escape or minimize the consequences of their actions,” Gibbons said. “Criminals convicted of serious offenses against society should not be released after serving only 50% of their sentence, and a threatened terrorist act.”

Prisoners convicted of most offenses currently receive one day of good conduct credit for each day served. Some offenses, such as attempted murder, sexual assault, and aggravated battery, prohibit prisoners from collecting good conduct credit of more than 4.5 days per month. Other prisoners, such as those convicted of first-degree murder or sentenced to natural life in prison, are ineligible to receive any good conduct credit at all. HB 5121 classifies attempt to commit terrorism as an offense subject to the 4.5 good conduct days per month limit.

“Criminals bent on creating fear and panic by devising violent plans must serve a sentence that is comparable with their actions,” Beiser said. “This legislation makes a crucial correction to state law to make sure terrorists serve out the sentence handed down to them.”

After unanimously passing the House on March 21, 2012, the bill moved to the Senate where Illinois State Sen. Bill Haine (D-Alton) is the bill's sponsor.

Gibbons proposed the legislation in response to the case of Olutosin Oduwole, who was sentenced to five years in prison after being convicted of attempt to make a terrorist threat. Under the current statute, Oduwole would only be required to serve two and a half years.

“Current law does not adequately deal with this crime and I am grateful for the work of Rep. Beiser and Sen. Haine to help right this injustice,” Gibbons said.

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