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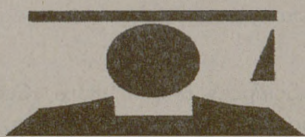
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Bill would monitor repeat sex offenders after parole

AUSTIN (AP) — Repeat, violent sex offenders who have completed their prison terms but are judged to be likely to strike again could face continued monitoring by the state under a bill approved Thursday by the Texas Senate.

"This [proposed] law says to sex offenders who have served their prison terms that Texas is still watching you. If you violate the terms of civil commitment or threaten our community, you're going to end up back in prison," Lt. Gov. Rick Perry said.

The bill sponsored by Sen. Florence Shapiro, R-Plano, now goes to the House for consideration.

It would subject people judged to be sexual predators in a civil commitment proceeding to several requirements including continued supervision through electronic monitoring or other tracking and treatment.

Sexually violent predators would be defined as those who are repeat sexually violent offenders and suffer from a "behavior abnormality" making them likely to engage in another predatory act of sexual violence.

Those who violated the terms of their "outpatient civil commitment" could be returned to prison.

"Currently, there is no method to protect

the public from sexual predators who serve their entire sentence in prison. ... This is the piece of the puzzle that is missing in our efforts to protect the public from the worst-of-the-worst sexual predators," Shapiro said.

"Currently, there is no method to protect the public from sexual predators who serve their entire sentence in prison."

— Sen. Florence Shapiro
R - Plano

Her original bill would have provided for the civil commitment of sexual predators to a secure facility. But concerns were raised about the approximately \$20 million cost to confine an estimated 15 people.

"We are nickel-and-dimeing everything now," Shapiro said.

By substituting monitoring for confinement, she said the cap is eliminated and the cost is lowered to about \$3.9 million.

Morales under FBI investigation

Fee request brings former attorney general under fire

TEXARKANA, Texas (AP) — A lawyer whose request for a half-billion dollars in legal fees for working on the state's tobacco settlement has led to an FBI investigation of Texas' former attorney general agreed Thursday to accept only \$1 million.

The lawyer, Mark Murr of Houston, is a longtime friend and former law partner of Dan Morales, who was Texas attorney general when the state reached a \$17.3 billion settlement with the tobacco industry in early 1998.

When Murr submitted his request for legal fees, other private attorneys who worked on the tobacco case for the

state said that Murr had done little or nothing to achieve the settlement. Some said they had not even heard of him.

Federal investigators and Morales' successor as attorney general are now looking into whether Morales falsified paperwork to make it look as if his friend contributed more than he really did.

Last year, a state arbitration panel decided Murr deserved only \$260 million. Later, a national arbitration panel recommended he get just \$1 million.

On Thursday, Murr's attorney, Roy Minton, and Texas Attorney General John Cornyn announced that Murr

would give up the fight for the \$260 million and accept the \$1 million. Cornyn has accused Morales of fraudulently trying to help his friend.

"Mr. Murr gave up in the face of what we believe was overwhelming evidence," Cornyn said.

The decision was announced just before a federal judge was to hear arguments on whether the three members of the state arbitration panel were illegally selected — they were chosen by Murr and Morales.

Investigators have not suggested that Morales profited personally. And Morales has denied any wrongdoing.

Former POWs observe anniversary of Geneva Accords

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two former prisoners of war who have risen to high office — Arizona Gov. John McCain and Texas Congressman John Johnson — celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions on Thursday.

At ceremonies sponsored by the American Red Cross, Johnson, R-Plano, said Yugoslavia has adhered to the convention's requirement for humane treatment of prisoners during wartime more than North Vietnam during its war with America.

Yugoslavia released three American prisoners this week after belatedly allowing a Red Cross visit, and NATO was expected to release Yugoslav soldiers.

"I think our friends in Europe are tuned to our humanitarian ideals than the Asian nations are," Johnson said. "I don't address the concerns NATO has about Yugoslav treatment of civilians, who are protected by the Geneva Conventions."

The Texan, whose fighter plane was shot down over North Vietnam in 1966, spent seven years as a prisoner of war. The rated combat pilot still bears the scars of a hand mobility from injuries sustained during his plane crash and imprisonment.

Johnson said neither he nor McCain, seeking the GOP presidential nomination, legitimate Red Cross workers during the war of captivity, and neither was treated according to the Geneva Conventions.

The accords, adopted by 188 countries in 1949, aim to protect human life and limb during wartime. They require that soldiers be treated humanely and that civilians be protected from the effects of war. They also provide for Red Cross access to military and military victims of war, including prisoners of war.

Johnson and McCain were together in a prison known as the Hanoi Hilton, a bridge with toilet paper for cards.

McCain said that although North Vietnam "at one time or another violated most of the Geneva Conventions," the international accords put meaningful pressure on his captors.

"War is wretched beyond description, only a fool or a fraud could sentimentalize the cruel reality," said McCain.

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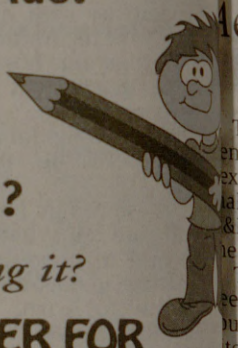
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