



**Crime bill passes House without dissent**

By MARK R. CHELLGREN

Associated Press Writer

324 words

2 March 1998

07:24 PM

Associated Press Newswires

APRS

English

(c) 1998. The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved.

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) - With the parents of a slain high school cheerleader looking on, the Kentucky House Monday passed a sweeping crime bill that denies parole to sex offenders who do not admit their crime and seek treatment.

The vote was 93-0. The Senate is pondering its own version of the crime bill.

"This ensures we keep these people off the street," said Rep. Brent Yonts, D-Greenville.

In the House gallery, the parents of Sarah Hansen watched the proceedings. Miss Hansen was killed abducted, raped and killed in January 1997 on what was to be a short trip from her Greenville home to the video store. About two dozen friends, classmates and teachers of Miss Hansen also attended.

Keith Woodall, 22, a convicted sex offender, is charged with the killing and prosecutors have already said they will seek the death penalty.

The 150-page bill covers a range of topics in criminal justice, from creating the penalty of life in prison without parole to a change that would let private prisons house medium-security inmates.

Other sections of the bill would impose harsher penalties whose crimes are directed at individuals based on their race, color, religion or national origin.

Another provision will require judges to let crime victims speak in court during penalty hearings if they choose.

"Sometimes, the victims of crime seem like they're silent," said Rep. Kevin Bratcher, R-Louisville.

The only controversy that arose during a lengthy explanation of sections of the bill was a section that would have forced local school districts to pay for the GED work of some younger inmates. Rep. Tom Riner, D-Louisville, withdrew the proposal after questions about its cost.

Rep. John Will Stacy, D-West Liberty, whose district includes a large prison, said many school districts are strapped to provide education for their own students.

Rush

AP Photo

Document aprs000020010915du3302tkp