

## **Sex Offenders - SSOSA**

### **Special Sex Offender Sentencing Alternative (SSOSA)**

The Special Sex Offender Sentencing Alternative (SSOSA) is a sentencing option available to the court. Under a SSOSA sentence, the court may impose up to one year of jail time, but frequently suspends the rest of an offender's sentence in exchange for treatment. Abuse of SSOSA has led to sentences of incarceration for horrible crimes, especially against children by people they know and trust, that are dramatically below the standard range for other criminals convicted of the same or less serious crimes.

In 2004, after pressure from House Republicans, the Legislature passed ESHB 2400 which significantly limited the application of SSOSA. It made persons with adult convictions for violent offenses committed within five years of the current offense, persons who caused substantial bodily harm to the victim, and persons who had no connection with the victim other than the offense itself ineligible for a SSOSA.

ESHB 2400 required a court to consider additional factors when deciding whether to grant a SSOSA, including whether the offender had multiple victims, whether the offender was amenable to treatment, the risk the offender posed to the community, the victim, or persons similarly situated to the victim, and whether the alternative was too lenient in light of the extent and circumstances of the offense.

During 2005-06, the Legislature passed HB 3252 that prohibited an offender entering a plea of guilty from receiving a Special Sex Offender Sentencing Alternative, unless the offender admitted to the underlying offense.