**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**S. 631**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Senator Walker

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Introduced in the Senate on May 1, 2025

Currently residing in the Senate Committee on **Judiciary**

Summary: Limitation on places of residence of certain sex offenders; exceptions

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 5/1/2025 Senate Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal‑page 8)

 5/1/2025 Senate Referred to Committee on **Judiciary** (Senate Journal‑page 8)

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=631&session=126&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[05/01/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/631_20250501.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 23‑3‑535, RELATING TO LIMITATIONS ON PLACES OF RESIDENCE OF CERTAIN SEX OFFENDERS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR A SEX OFFENDER TO RESIDE WITHIN ONE THOUSAND FEET OF A BUS STOP; AND TO PROVIDE THAT OWNERS OR RENTERS OF IMPACTED PROPERTY NOT BE REQUIRED TO RELOCATE IF THEY OWNED OR RENTED THE PROPERTY BEFORE THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ACT.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 23‑3‑535 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 23‑3‑535. (A) As contained in this section:

 (1) “Children's recreational facility” means a facility owned and operated by a city, county, or special purpose district used for the purpose of recreational activity for children under the age of eighteen.

 (2) “Daycare center” means an arrangement where, at any one time, there are three or more preschool‑age children, or nine or more school‑age children receiving child care.

 (3) “School” does not include a home school or an institution of higher education.

 (4) “Within one thousand feet” means a measurement made in a straight line, without regard to intervening structures or objects, from the nearest portion of the property on which the sex offender resides to the nearest property line of the premises of a school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, school bus stop, or public playground, whichever is closer.

 (B) It is unlawful for a sex offender who has been convicted of any of the following offenses to reside within one thousand feet of a school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, school bus stop, or public playground:

 (1) criminal sexual conduct with a minor, first degree;

 (2) criminal sexual conduct with a minor, second degree;

 (3) assault with intent to commit criminal sexual conduct with a minor;

 (4) kidnapping a person under eighteen years of age; or

 (5) trafficking in persons of a person under eighteen years of age except when the court makes a finding on the record that the offense did not include a criminal sexual offense or an attempted criminal sexual offense.

 (C) This section does not apply to a sex offender who:

 (1) resided within one thousand feet of a school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, school bus stop, or public playground before the effective date of this act;

 (2) resided within one thousand feet of a school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, school bus stop, or public playground on property the sex offender owned before the sex offender was charged with any of the offenses enumerated in subsection (B);

 (3) resides within one thousand feet of a school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, school bus stop, or public playground as a result of the establishment of a new school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, or public playground;

 (4) resides in a jail, prison, detention facility, group home for persons under the age of twenty‑one licensed by the Department of Social Services, residential treatment facility for persons under the age of twenty‑one licensed by the Department of Health and Environmental Control, or other holding facility, including a mental health facility;

 (5) resides in a homeless shelter for no more than one year, a group home for persons under the age of twenty‑one licensed by the Department of Social Services, or a residential treatment facility for persons under the age of twenty‑one licensed by the Department of Health and Environmental Control, and the site was purchased by the organization prior to the effective date of this act;

 (6) resides in a community residential care facility, as defined in Section 44‑7‑130(6); or

 (7) resides in a nursing home, as defined in Section 44‑7‑130(13).

 (D) If upon registration of a sex offender, or at any other time, a local law enforcement agency determines that a sex offender is in violation of this section, then the local law enforcement agency must, within thirty days, notify the sex offender of the violation, provide the sex offender with a list of areas in which the sex offender is not permitted to reside, and notify the sex offender that the sex offender has thirty days to vacate the residence. If the sex offender fails to vacate the residence within thirty days, then the sex offender must be punished as follows:

 (1) for a first offense, the sex offender is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned not more than thirty days, or fined not more than five hundred dollars, or both;

 (2) for a second offense, the sex offender is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned not more than three years, or fined not more than one thousand dollars, or both;

 (3) for a third or subsequent offense, the sex offender is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned for not more than five years, or fined not more than five thousand dollars, or both.

 (E) A local government may not enact an ordinance that:

 (1) contains penalties that exceed or are less lenient than the penalties contained in this section; or

 (2) expands or contracts the boundaries of areas in which a sex offender may or may not reside as contained in subsection (B).

 (F)(1) At the beginning of each school year, each school district must provide:

 (a) local law enforcement agencies with a list of school bus stops within the school district;

 (a)(b) the names and addresses in writing and on the district website of every sex offender who resides within one thousand feet of a school bus stop within the school district to the parents or guardians of a student who boards or disembarks a school bus at a stop covered by this subsection; or

 (b)(c) the hyperlink to the sex offender registry web site on the school district's web site for the purpose of gathering this information.

 (2) Local law enforcement agencies must check the school districts' web sites to determine if each school district has complied with this subsection. If a hyperlink does not appear on a school district web site, then the local law enforcement agency must contact the school district to confirm that the school district has provided the parents or guardians with the names and addresses of every sex offender who resides within one thousand feet of a school bus stop within the school district. If the local law enforcement agency determines that this information has not been provided, then the local law enforcement agency must inform the school district that it is in violation of this subsection. If the school district does not comply within thirty days after notice of its violation, then the school district is subject to equitable injunctive relief and, if the plaintiff prevails, then the district shall pay the plaintiff's attorney's fees and costs.

SECTION 2. An individual who was the owner or lawful renter of a property impacted by the residency restrictions established in this act before the effective date of this act shall not be required to relocate or otherwise alter their residence as a result of this act, provided that such residency has been continuous and lawful.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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