

Kansas Hard Fifty Law Explained

(KAIR)--The Hard Fifty law in Kansas has received quite a bit of attention in recent months as state lawmakers work to fine tune the law to standards set by the United States Supreme Court. But there has been some confusion on what the law actually is. Democratic State Representative Jerry Henry explains the law applies to most violent crimes that are not severe enough to warrant the death penalty. He says it is very strict and straightforward. If you are sentenced under the hard fifty law, you will serve an entire fifty years in prison with no chance of parole.

Henry says the problem with the hard fifty law comes from the question as to who can determine if the law should be applied to a particular sentence. The United States Supreme Court did not strike down the law completely, but ruled that the judge in a case could not hand the sentence down. They said it was a such a harsh punishment, that it should be left to the jury in a case to determine.

Henry says state legislators risked losing the opportunity to apply the law as they scrambled to make the needed changes. There are currently ninety people in Kansas that have been convicted under the hard fifty law, and if the changes were not made, officials risked having those sentences changed to something more lenient such as twenty five years in prison with the possibility of parole.

Henry does say that there has been some opposition to the law. Defense attorneys have already come forward claiming that their client's sentence was too harsh, and will most likely push for a re sentencing or even a re trial.

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