

COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill: House Bill 1356

Printer's No.: 1751

Sponsor: Rep. Stephens

Prepared by: Gregg Warner

Synopsis: This bill amends section 5781 of the Crimes Code, Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, to extend the expiration date for the Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Control Act to December 31, 2018.

Summary: The bill extends the expiration date for the Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Control Act (18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 57) to December 31, 2018. The wiretap law is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2013, unless extended by statute.

Effective date

This act takes effect immediately.

Background: The House of Representatives passed House Bill 1356 on September 25, 2013 by a vote of 200 to 0. On April 30, 2013 the Senate Judiciary Committee reported identical legislation, Senate Bill 867, from committee. On May 14, 2013 the Senate passed Senate Bill 867 by a vote of 49 to 0. Senate Bill 867 is pending before the House Judiciary Committee.

2012 legislation

Last session the General Assembly passed landmark legislation modernizing Pennsylvania's wiretap legislation. 2012 Act 202 gave law enforcement new tools to fight crime. However, the legislation did not extend the expiration date for the law.

Wiretap extensions

Traditionally, the General Assembly extends the expiration date for the wiretap act every four or five years. It was most recently extended by 2008 Act 111 to December 31, 2013. Previously the expiration date was extended by 2004 Act 173 to December 31, 2008.