

VIGILANTISM

The sex offender registry is directly responsible for harassment, property damage, assault, and murder of innocent people. The results of one study show that, after a family member has been identified by neighbors or others as a registered offender, the non-offender family members living with him have experienced the following:

44% have been threatened or harassed by neighbors.

7% have been physically assaulted or injured.

27% have had property damaged.

30% have been threatened, harassed, assaulted, injured, or suffered property damage directly due to Megan's Law.

WORK/ FINANCIAL ISSUES

82% of registered sex offenders have difficulty finding a job because employers don't want to hire registered sex offenders, creating financial hardship for their family members.

53% of registered sex offenders who have lost a job did so directly due to Megan's Law that, creating financial hardship for their families.

OTHER EFFECTS TO FAMILY MEMBERS

22% of registered sex offenders had to move out of a residence that they rented because their landlord found out their sex offender status through Megan's Law; the family was evicted with them.

17% of registered sex offenders had to move out of a residence that they rented because their neighbors found out their sex offender status through Megan's Law; the innocent family members were evicted with them.

12% of registered sex offenders had to move out of a home that they owned because their neighbors found out through Megan's Law that a sex offender lived there.

CONCLUSION

"Civil sanctions imposed on sex offenders are sometimes called *invisible punishments* and often result in barriers to reintegration (Travis, 2005)."

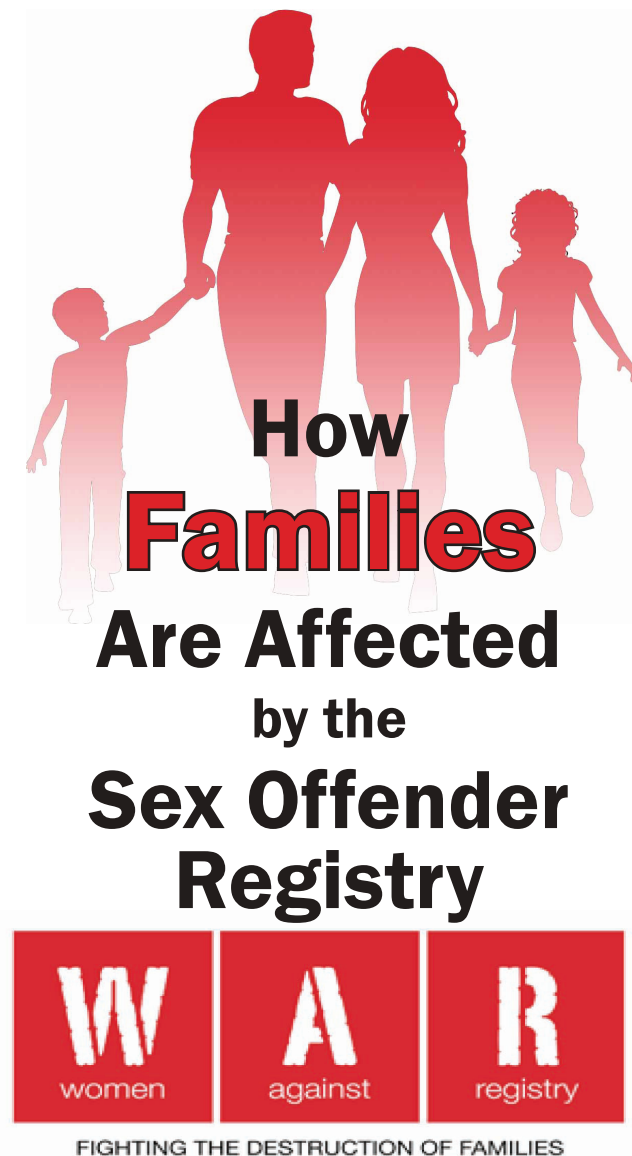
It is now apparent that these sanctions and invisible punishments are not so invisible where the family members of registered former offenders are concerned. In fact, the effects are profound and inexcusable.

The effect of the public registry on the *family* of registered offenders cannot be overlooked. From shaming to banishment to outright violence, these family members are facing harsh treatment daily simply because they are the family members of registered offenders.

We, the members of WAR, feel that it is time to stop the cruelty. It is time to reform the registry for the good of the over *three million family members* of registered sex offenders who live under the invisible punishments of the registry every day.

The study quoted throughout this brochure can be found in its entirety at: http://www.opd.ohio.gov/AWA_Information/AW_levenson_family_impact_study.pdf

¹ Travis, J. (2005). *But they all come back: Facing the challenges of prisoner reentry*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.



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“SORN (sex offender registration and notification) laws have extended sanctions and their negative economic, social, and psychological consequences to others associated with sex offenders.”

“A result may be that these laws ultimately impel loved ones to distance themselves from the registered sex offender in order to limit, manage, or cope with their own experiences of collateral consequences.”

“Such a system is well intentioned but misguided. The result will be an exponentially growing number of registered sex offenders who are publicly identified for longer periods of time; of course this will also proliferate the impact of SORN laws on family members. Part of the controversy is the *collateral consequences* for family members of the registered former offender.”

The above comments are taken directly from the only study to date on this subject: Levenson and Tewksbury. *Collateral Damage: Family Members of Registered Sex Offenders*.

This brochure will cover just a few of the most onerous aspects that families of registered offenders must deal with and they are:

THE PUBLIC REGISTRY'S EFFECT ON THE CHILDREN

THE EFFECT OF RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS

WORK/FINANCIAL ISSUES

VIGILANTISM



THE PUBLIC REGISTRY'S EFFECT ON THE CHILDREN

While proponents of the sex offender registry scramble to find even one case where the registry has protected a child, the children of registered offenders numbering into the hundreds of thousands suffer daily. One study found the following results:

When asked, children of registered offenders stated that because their family members were listed on the public registry:

47% - had been harassed by others

59% - were ridiculed by others

52% - suffered teasing by others

22% - were physically attacked by others

65% - feel left out with other children

77% - suffer depression

73% - feel anxiety

63% - suffer from fear

13% - have suicidal tendencies

80% - have anger issues

When we read these statistics we must ask: Are we neglecting the welfare of these children or perhaps much worse, encouraging behaviors that lead to children becoming social outcasts due to the public registry?

THE EFFECT OF RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS

While studies have shown that residency restrictions have no effect on recidivism, a pitchfork carrying public still pushes such outdated laws. A study has looked at the effect of these laws as they relate to the family of registered offenders:

41% found it difficult to find an affordable place to live that was not too close to a school, bus stop, park, daycare, or playground.

28% experienced a landlord refusing to rent to someone because a family member was a sex offender.

18% experienced a landlord refusing to renew a lease because a family member was a sex offender.

15% had to move out of a residence that they rented because it was too close to a school, bus stop, park, daycare, playground, or other place children congregate, and they wanted to live with their registered family member.

33% were unable to live with their partners because of residency restrictions.

16% had to move out of a house that they owned because it was too close to a school, bus stop, park, daycare, playground, or other place children congregate, and they wanted to live with their registered family members.

REGISTRANTS & FAMILIES SUPPORT LINE

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