

REGISTRIES PROMOTE VIGILANTE VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

The public sex offense registry promotes discrimination, not only against those on it, but also their spouses, children, parents and loved ones.

Psychologist John Q. LaFond references a Washington State study that found notification laws do not prevent crime. They do however, lead to quicker arrest times because of the constant scrutiny. These laws also disrupt employment, housing, and support for registered persons causing stress and increasing the likelihood of recidivism. LaFond, "Preventing Sexual Violence." APA 2005.

"Employment problems and subsequent financial hardships experienced by [registrants], emerged as the most pressing issue identified by family members. The likelihood of housing disruption was correlated with residential restriction laws; larger buffer distances led to increased frequencies of housing crisis. Family members living with a registered "sex offender" (RSO) were more likely to experience threats and harassment by neighbors. Children of RSOs reportedly experienced adverse consequences including stigmatization and differential treatment by teachers and classmates. More than half had experienced ridicule, teasing, depression, anxiety, fear, or anger. Unintended consequences can impact family members' ability to support RSOs in their efforts to avoid recidivism and successfully reintegrate." — Levenson and Tewksbury, R. (2009). Collateral damage: Family members of registered sex offenders. American Journal of Criminal Justice.

THE SEX OFFENSE REGISTRY HAS LED TO MURDER

To date, roughly 200 murders have been directly tied to the sex offense registry.

Patrick Drum, WA (2012): this man used the registry to murder two registrants in Port Angeles and was stopped before he could murder two more.

Jeremy and Christine Moody, SC (2013): this Neo Nazi couple picked their victim from the registry, then killed the registrant and his wife because "God told them to do it." Their arrest, thwarted another murder as they had already identified their next victim and planned his execution.

James Fairbanks, NE (2019): this man murdered his neighbor after researching vigilantes and gathering information from the registry and from a vigilante Facebook page.

THE REGISTRY SERVES NO LEGITIMATE PURPOSE

Most sex crimes are committed in the home by someone known to the victim. Most sex crime arrests are of those with no prior record. The registry does not impact sex crime rates for those on it or for those with no prior records. People use the registry for purposes other than public safety, including salaciousness and the commission of crimes against registered persons and their loved ones. If the sex offense registry does not protect the public, as proponents claim, then the public sex offense registry must be abolished.

In Reality does the Public Sex Offense Registry Guarantee Safety?

NO!



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IN SEARCH OF

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC POLICY

If people in America were truly serious about sexual abuse prevention, they should start with the most basic questions:

Where does most sexual abuse take place?

The answer is “at home.” A 2011 study found 74.8% of sex crimes occur at home. — “Sexual Assault in Texas.” 2011 Crime in Texas. www.dps.texas.gov.

Who is most likely to commit a sexual offense?

Family members and acquaintances (teachers, coaches, friends, etc.) commit about 96% of sex offenses. — “Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2014 National Report.” National Center for Juvenile Justice.

The registry was inspired by tragic cases that are exceedingly rare; three NISMART (National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrown-away Children) studies found only around 100 “stereotypical kidnappings” occur annually, and only half were sexually motivated

Are people listed on the public registry truly the most likely to commit a sex crime?

A 2008 study found over 95% of sex offenses in New York were committed by first-time offenders (not by those on the registry). — Sandler, J. C., Freeman, N. J., and Socia, K. M. (2008). Does a watched pot boil? A time-series analysis of New York State's sex offender registration and notification law. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 14(4), 284–302.

THE REGISTRY DOES NOT WORK

Rates of child sexual abuse have been declining since 1990 — before federal registry laws. The decline is largely due to social and economic factors, not the registry. — Finkelhor and Jones. 2006. “Why Have Child Maltreatment Rates Declined?” *Journal of Social Issues*. Volume 62, Issue 4.

The aforementioned 2008 Sandler study reviewed sex crime rates for ten years prior to, and ten years after the enactment of the public registry in New York. It found no declines in arrests of persons previously convicted of sex offenses nor in arrests of persons with no prior sex offense record.

RE-OFFENSE RATES FOR SEX OFFENSES ARE NOT "FRIGHTENING AND HIGH"

Some state-based legislation, such as “Jessica’s Law” includes provisions that those convicted of sex offenses must wear GPS devices, often for life, on the grounds that recidivism is inevitable. Ellman and Ellman revealed in their 2015 study that false sex offense recidivism data guides major judicial decisions and policies. Even the Supreme Court has cited faulty data based on a throwaway comment in a *Psychology Today* article. These false claims of “frightening and high” re-offense rates are not true, and not based on evidence, research, or data. — Ellman, Ira and Ellman, Tara, “Frightening and High”: The Supreme Court's Crucial Mistake About Sex Crime Statistics” (2015). *Constitutional Commentary*.419.

A 2019 Bureau of Judicial Statistics (BJS) study found that only 7.2% of registrants were rearrested, and only half (3.6%) of those were re-convicted for a sex offense within nine years of release. — “Recidivism of Sex Offenders Released from State Prison: A nine year follow up (2005-14).” BJS.gov.

THE REGISTRY IS NOT USED

FOR ITS INTENDED PURPOSE

“The purpose of the law was to provide an awareness to parents.... We never said it was going to stop them from reoffending or wandering to another town.” — Maureen Kanka

If the registry has no effect on sex crime rates, why have it at all?

A 2005 joint poll by CNN, USA Today, and Gallup found that only 38% of participants were aware that their state maintained a public registry. Even though 94% of those polled favored registries, only 23% had ever actually checked the registry. Interestingly, 34% voiced concerns over harassment and vigilantism as a result of the registry. — Lydia Saad, “Sex Offender Registries are Underutilized by the Public.” Gallup. 2005.

A report on the use of the Texas sex offense registry (SOR) found that 73.6% of respondents were familiar and 19.6% were unfamiliar with the registry; 30.2% had never used the registry; 30% accessed the SOR out of safety concerns; and 40% did so only out of curiosity. In fact, the SOR increased public fear among those who used it. — Kate Palmer “Half of Americans have checked the Sex Offender Registry.” YouGov. 14 Aug 2013.

In addition to underwhelming use of registries, most people do not actively seek community notification alerts either. ABC 4 in Charleston, SC reported that only 1300 of 5 million South Carolina residents; only 8500 of 3 million residents in Arkansas; and only 5400 of 5.7 million Colorado residents signed up for active registry notifications in their home states. — Ashley Blackstone. “SLED sends sex offender alerts. Do you get them?” ABC 4 Charleston.