

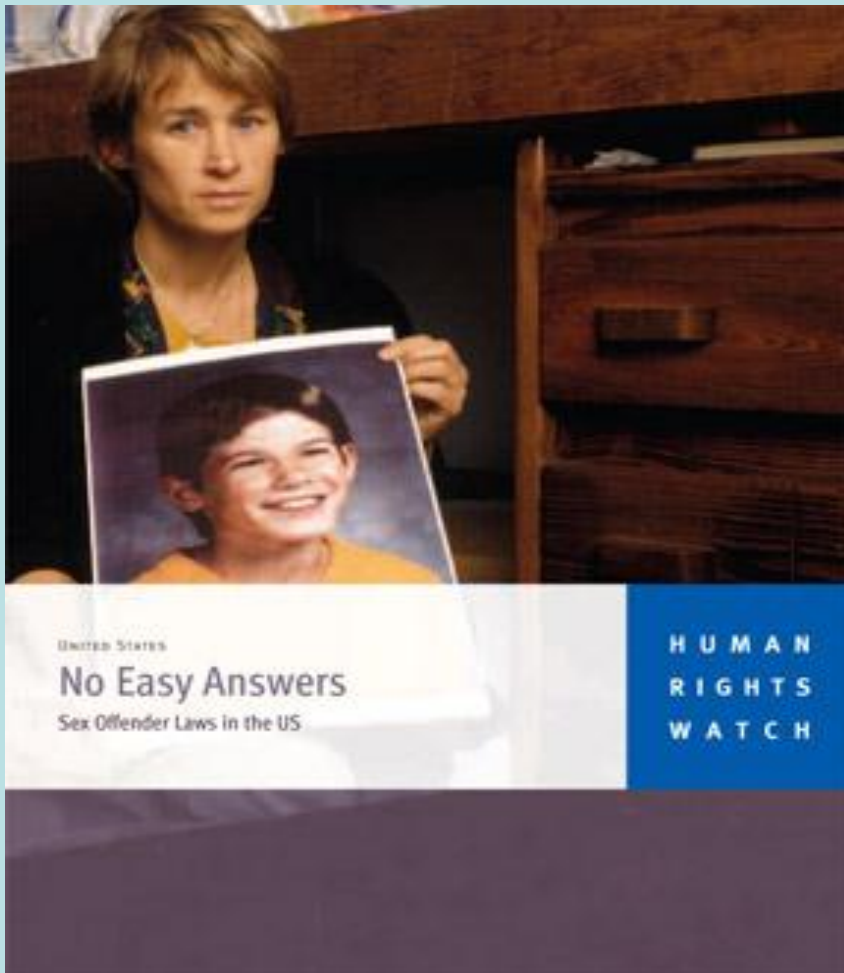
HUMAN
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More Harm Than Good?

Sex Offender Laws in the US

No Easy Answers: Sex Offender Laws in the US



- No conclusive evidence that broad-based registration, community notification, and residency restriction laws prevent sexual violence
- Increasing evidence it makes it nearly impossible to safely rehabilitate former offenders



Megan's Law spawned by tragedy and revulsion



Anguished dad says life 'in ruins' since Klaas' death

St. Petersburg Times SPECIAL REPORT

The Jessica Lunsford Tragedy



Child Imposter Indicted For Sex Crimes

Myths About Sexual Violence

- Our children have most to fear from strangers
 - In fact, more than 90% of child sexual abuse is committed by someone the child knows and trusts
- Convicted sex offenders will inevitably repeat their crime
 - Authoritative studies show that three out of four do not recidivate within 15 years of release from prison
 - Statistics from the New York's Department of Corrections show a recidivism rate of between 3-5 percent over a three- to five-year period.

87% of victims of sexual violence each year were abused by someone who had no previous sex crimes conviction

Registration

Police should know where I live, and being monitored is part of the price I pay for what I did.

--registrant convicted of rape in Arizona, speaking with Human Rights Watch.

State Registration Laws

- Includes non-violent offenders
 - Consensual teenage sex
 - Public urination

I know there are violent sexual predators that need to be punished, but this seems like punishment far beyond reasonable for what my son did.

--mother of a teenager who is a registered sex offender, speaking with Human Rights Watch.

Child Offenders

My son doesn't really understand what sex is, so its hard to help him understand why he has to register as a sex offender.

-- low recidivism rates—4% in some studies

--less than 10% of offenders convicted as adults had a sex crime conviction as a child

Length of Registration

- A majority of states have no procedures to allow someone to petition to be removed from the registry
- Many offenders must register for life
- Length of registration often offense-based, rather than the result of an individualized risk assessment

Do Registries Work?

Lawmakers have no idea the kind of burden they put on law enforcement when they increase the number of offenders who must register.

--Chief probation officer, speaking with Human Rights Watch.

The logo for Stateline.org is displayed on a dark blue background with horizontal white stripes. The text "Stateline.org" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below it, in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, is the tagline "WHERE POLICY & POLITICS NEWS CLICK".

Stateline.org
WHERE POLICY & POLITICS NEWS CLICK

States Lose Track Of Sex Offenders
By Kathleen Murphy, Staff Writer

Registration Reforms

- Limit registration to those individually determined to pose a high- or medium- risk to the community
- Allow registrants to periodically petition or appeal for review of their initial risk-level status
- Goal: Create reasonable registration laws that apply to at-risk offenders, only so long as they pose a risk

On-line registries



SEX OFFENDER INFOCENTER

There are an estimated 500,000 registered offenders listed in on-line registries.

My son's story is like a nightmare, where all the terrible things, it all collides together. He talks to us about ending it all by committing suicide. We don't think he will, but we don't know.

--mother of a teenage registrant,
speaking with Human Rights Watch

Does Community Notification Work?

The logo for CSOM (Community Safety and Outreach Model) is displayed in a large, stylized, blue font with a white outline and a drop shadow effect. The letters are bold and blocky, with the 'C' and 'S' being particularly prominent.

The fact that there is little research on community notification makes it difficult to determine which approach is most effective, or if notification is effective at all. However, some states have adopted promising approaches to notification that involve community education and the strategic use of resources.

Practical information?

- **Offender's Name**
- **SEX OFFENDER**
- ***Last Known Address as of: 9/24/2007***
3109 SE POWELL
TOPEKA, KS 66605
County: SHAWNEE
Race/Sex: W / M
Date of Birth: 1/2/1977
Registered Since: 7/9/1998
Offense: ATTEMPTED AGGRAVATED
INDECENT LIBERTIES W/CHILD

Community Notification Reforms

- Ensure police actually pass on potential threats to the relevant community
- Eliminate on-line notification, or limit it to high-risk offenders, only so long as they pose a risk

Residency Restrictions

We've taken stable people who have committed a sex crime and cast them out of their homes, away from their jobs, away from treatment, and away from public transportation. It's just absolutely absurd what these laws have done, and the communities are at greater risk because of it.

--Iowa Sheriff, talking to Human Rights Watch about the impact of residency restrictions

No evidence residency restrictions work

- A recent study by the Minnesota Department of Corrections analyzed 224 sex offender recidivists to see if where they lived had an effect on their crimes. The study found that residential proximity had very little impact on a recidivist's opportunity to re-offend.
- More than half (113) came into contact with their victims through "social or relationship proximity" to the child.

Residency restrictions make it nearly impossible for former offenders to safely re-enter the community



Child safety experts and rape prevention advocates

When a sex offender succeeds in living in the community, we are all safer.

--child safety expert, speaking with Human Rights Watch.

- More funding for
 - Prevention, education, and awareness programs
 - Counseling for victims of sexual violence
 - Programs that facilitate treatment and re-entry services for convicted sex offenders



Registries in Other Countries

- Sexual violence is a worldwide problem
- But the US is the only country other than South Korea with broad-based community notification
- Australia, Canada, France, Ireland, Japan, and the United Kingdom register convicted sex offenders and allow for limited police notification

TIMES ONLINE

From The Times
June 9, 2007

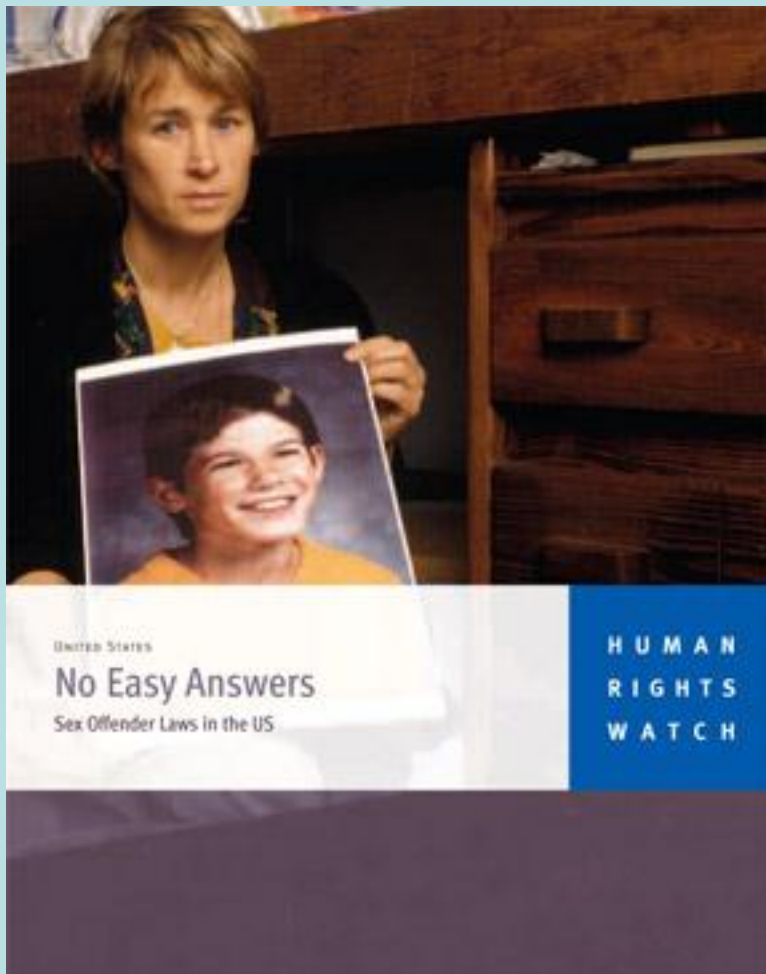
'Megan's Law' plan scrapped over fears abusers forced into hiding
Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

Model community notification program: Minnesota

The extent of the information disclosed and the community to whom disclosure is made must be related to the level of danger posed by the offender, to the offender's pattern of offending behavior, and to the need of the community members for information to enhance their individual and collective safety.

--Minnesota community notification statute.

No Easy Answers: Sex Offender Laws in the US



- We are convinced that public safety will be as protected, if not more so, by modified registration, community notification, and residency restriction laws
- Reform will not be easy, but a safe society is one with the intelligence, courage, and compassion to protect the human rights of all of us

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