

Sex Offenses & Sex Offender Registration Task Force

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Sex Offender Task Force Charge

“The Sex Offenses and Sex Offender Registration Task Force is charged with ensuring law enforcement and communities are able to identify high-risk sex offenders and focus on monitoring those offenders to protect victims, improve public safety, and maintain the seriousness of each offense so that law enforcement and communities are able to identify and monitor high-risk sex offenders.”

Guiding Principles

- **Protect Public Safety:**
 - Policies for people with sex offenses must enhance community safety.
- **Use Evidence-Informed Practices:**
 - Illinois laws and policies should be informed by research and practices shown to protect victims and reduce future offenses.
- **Allocate Resources Efficiently:**
 - The state's limited public resources should be invested in programs that do the most to prevent offending, lower recidivism, and improve outcomes for victims, families, and communities. Funding priority should be given to strategies that have demonstrated success.
- **Make Decisions Based on Assessments:**
 - To better protect communities, law enforcement agencies must be able to differentiate between people who have high, moderate, and low risks and needs. Individualized assessments should be the basis for determining appropriate sanctions, treatment, and supervision.
- **Hold Individuals and Systems Accountable:**
 - People must be held accountable for the harm they have caused to victims and communities with punishment that is proportional to the offense. The justice system also must be held accountable for preventing offending, reducing recidivism, increasing public safety, wisely using scarce resources, and supporting people in their efforts to lead positive and productive lives.

Recap of the Research

Who should be on the registry?

- Recidivism (Pryzbylski)
- Risk Assessments (Hanson)

How should the registry be structured?

- Risk Assessments (Hanson)

How should the registry work?

- Registration Notification (Lobanov-Rostovsky)
- Residency Restrictions (Lobanov-Rostovsky)

What restrictions or other requirements should exist?

- Risk Assessments (Hanson)
- Treatment (Pryzbylski)
- Residency Restrictions (Lobanov-Rostovsky)

Roger Przybylski's Recidivism Conclusions and Policy Implications

- Different types of sex offenders have markedly different rates of recidivism
- Research suggests that different recidivism reduction policies and practices are needed for different types of sex offenders
- Policies and practices that take into account the differential reoffending risks posed by different types of sex offenders are likely to be more effective and cost-beneficial than those that treat sex offenders as a largely homogenous group

Roger Przybylski's Treatment Conclusions and Policy Implications

- Evidence suggests that treatment can and does work
- Rather than following a one size fits all approach, treatment is apt to be most effective when it is tailored to the risks, needs and offense dynamics of individual sex offenders

R. Karl Hanson's Risk-Assessment Conclusions and Policy Implications

- Risk assessment should inform not only the likelihood of recidivism, but also risk management strategies
 - Treatment and change focussed community supervision lower the risk of individuals in the community.
 - Good release planning promotes effective reintegration

- Risk assessments need to be regularly updated – ideally once a year, minimally once every two years.
 - Risk increases with new offences and poor community adjustment; risk decreases the longer individuals remain offence-free in the community.

- Structured risk-assessments are more accurate than unstructured risk-assessments
 - Overrides degrade predictive accuracy

R. Karl Hanson's Risk-Assessment Conclusions and Policy Implications

- Lifetime restrictions are targeting a population of individuals that does not exist.
 - There are no individuals who remain a significant risk for sexual offending after remaining 20 years sexual offense-free in the community.
 - Most individuals with a history of sexual crime cross the desistance threshold after 10 years offense-free in the community.

Final Points:

- Invest the most resources in the highest risk cases
 - Align interventions, service, and supervision with risk levels
- Sort individuals according to risk levels
 - Have structured methods for assigning individuals to risk levels
- Routinely revise risk levels
 - Have structured methods for revising risk level assignment

Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky's Notifications

Conclusions and Policy Implications

- The results are mixed, with some studies finding reductions in sexual recidivism, while most show no reductions
- Public believes SORN is beneficial
- There are numerous negative impacts on offenders:
 - Threatened or harassed, job loss, property damaged, negative psychological consequences

Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky's Residency Restrictions

Conclusions and Policy Implications

- No reduction in sexual re-offense
- No reduction in sex crime rate
- No deterrence for sexual re-offending
- Most offenders meet victims (not strangers) in private residence
- Offenders report negative effects like limited housing, increased homelessness, and loss of family support

Recap of Research

Main Conclusions and Policy Implications

- Risk-assessments should be utilized to differentiate offender's risk-levels to both notify the public of persons with the highest-risk as well as inform offender supervision and treatment
- Recidivism rates vary for different types of sex offenders – they should not be treated as a homogenous group
- Treatment does work and should be utilized
- Residency restrictions do not reduce recidivism and have negative consequences for offenders

Recap of Illinois Current Practices

Conviction-based registry

- Risk-assessments are not utilized to decide who goes on the public registry

Two conviction-based “tiers”

- 10-year registrants
- Lifetime registrants (Also referred to statutorily as “sexual predators”)
- Risk-assessments are not utilized to decide what tier someone falls on

Residency Restrictions

- Certain offenders cannot live within 500 feet of school, parks, playgrounds, daycares, facility providing services to those under 18
- Cannot live at same address as another registrant

Policy Discussion

Residency Restrictions

Research:

- Residence restrictions do not decrease sexual reoffending rates
- Most offenders do not victimize strangers, but rather people they know
- Collateral consequences include increased homelessness and loss of support

Illinois:

- Persons convicted of certain sex offenses are restricted from living within 500 feet of a school, playground, or any facility providing programs or services exclusively directed towards people under the age of 18
- While the statute lists certain offenses, in practice many more registrants have these restrictions placed on them
- Some municipalities have extended the 500 feet to upwards of 2,000 feet

Limit or remove residence restrictions for persons convicted of a sex offense.

Policy Discussion

Lifetime MSR/Parole

Research:

- As persons remain offense free, their risk levels decrease.
- There is not a population of people who remain at the highest risk for their entire lives without committing a new offense, so lifetime parole is targeting a population of persons that do not exist.

Illinois:

- For individuals convicted of certain sex offenses (i.e. predatory criminal sexual assault, aggravated criminal sexual assault, and aggravated child pornography), Illinois statute lists their MSR term shall range from 3 years to life.
- The parole agents complete progress reports every 180 days.

Remove the option of lifetime Mandatory Supervised Release (MSR) for persons convicted of sex offenses.

Policy Discussion

Risk-Assessments

Research:

- Higher risk for re-offending generally than for sexually motivated offenses.
- Risk assessment should be specific to risk of sex offending as well as general offending.
- Consideration of gender differences important.
- Overrides undermine predictive accuracy of instruments.
- Information from risk assessment should guide management and treatment.

Illinois:

- General risk assessment instruments- LSI-R; SPIN
- Sex offending risk assessment instruments- less clear

Use validated, structured risk assessments to identify risk to sexually reoffend and general offending risk. Overrides of the risk assessments should not be allowed, and the assessments should be used to guide management and treatment plans, not just identify risk. Risk level should be reassessed ideally once a year, but minimally every two years.

Policy Discussion

Treatment and Risk-Assessments

Research:

- Treatment can work.
- Adhere to the RNR principles.
- Treatment should be tailored to the individual.
- CBT/relapse prevention can produce modest reductions.

Illinois:

- Treatment generally required, but quality is unknown.

Treatment should be utilized and should be informed by risk-assessment.

Policy Discussion

Registration Terminology

Research:

- Overuse of controversial terminology can dilute public safety and negatively impact low-risk individuals.
- Identification of specific subsets of offenders should be based on clinical assessment.

Illinois:

- All lifetime registrants are defined as “sexual predators” in the Sex Offender Registration Act

Revise or remove the current usage of the term “sexual predator” for lifetime registrants.

Policy Discussion

Public Notification

Research:

- Risk is cut in half for every 5 years offense free in the community.
- Cross the desistance threshold 10 years offense free.
- Registration should be limited to those at risk for sexual recidivism.

Illinois:

- Two “tiers”: 10-year registrants and lifetime registrants.
- Some convicted of murder are on the registry, even if not sexually motivated.

The public registry should only contain persons who are at high risk for sexual recidivism, should only contain persons convicted of a sex offense, and should allow for the potential to be removed from the registry.

Policy Discussion

Tier System

Research:

- Registration reflecting actual risk is more effective.
- Tiers should be based on structured risk-assessment.

Illinois:

- Statute-based registration periods.
- Two “tiers”: 10-year registrants and lifetime registrants.

Use a registry “tier system” that reflects actual risk of sexual re-offending.