

SEX OFFENDERS

Common myths about sex offender continue to influence public policy.

- ▶ Only 5.3 percent of sex offenders are rearrested for a new sex crime within three years of release.¹
- ▶ Individuals known to the victim and their families commit 90 percent of sex crimes against children. Only 23 percent of sex crimes are committed by a stranger.²
- ▶ As of January 2010, 27 states had enacted residency restrictions that limit the distance a registered sex offender may live to a school, child care center, park or other place children may gather. There is no evidence that residency restrictions reduce incidence of sexual offenses, nor is there any correlation between an offender's proximity to children and their offenses.³
- ▶ 34 states have laws that require or allow the use of GPS technology for certain sex offenders. Offenders subject to monitoring demonstrate a slight decrease in recidivism but it can cost between \$10 and \$14 per day per offender—not including the cost for staff to monitor the devices—and use of GPS technology does not mean offenders are supervised at all times.³
- ▶ 20 states allow civil commitment of sexually violent offenders after completion of a prison sentence. Offenders are committed indefinitely to a mental health treatment facility until deemed suitable for release into the community. The average cost of civil commitment is approximately \$94,000 per offender per year.⁴ Only 12 percent of civilly committed offenders are released, either after completing treatment or on legal grounds. Many refuse treatment while committed.³
- ▶ Studies show that prison sentences without sex offender specific treatment do not reduce recidivism rates.⁵ Treatment of a sex offender costs between \$5,000 and \$15,000 per year while incarceration can cost more than \$22,000 per year per offender, not including any treatment costs.⁶



States are working to balance tougher laws and public fears with effective policy to ensure community safety.

- ▶ Ten states have created multidisciplinary sex offender management or policy boards to evaluate state policies for sex offenders, create guidelines for treatment and supervision, make public policy recommendations and some have regulating authority for the agencies and organizations responsible for sex offender management.
- ▶ Many states use risk-based assessment tools designed to better predict the likelihood that a sex offender will recidivate, help identify specific risk factors and monitor treatment.⁷
- ▶ At least 35 states use risk-based assessment tools that can aid in sentencing and release decisions, levels of supervision, monitoring and treatment, appropriate application of registration and community notification laws.⁷
- ▶ Several states and local jurisdictions use polygraph examinations to assist in monitoring and treatment of sex offenders under community supervision. Polygraphs provide information for treatment planning and risk assessment purposes, as well as aid in offender accountability, but their use is controversial.⁸

¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Recidivism of Sex Offenders Released from Prison in 1994" NCJ 198281 (Nov. 2003).

² Bureau of Justice Statistics, "An Analysis of Data on Rape and Sexual Assault: Sex Offenses and Offenders" NCJ-163392 (Feb. 1997).

³ The Vera Institute of Justice, "The Pursuit of Safety: Sex Offender Policy in the United States" (Sept. 2008).

⁴ New York Times, "A Profile of Civil Commitment Around the Country" (March 3, 2007).

⁵ The Vera Institute of Justice, "Treatment and Reentry Practices for Sex Offenders" (Sept. 2008).

⁶ CSOM, "Myths and Facts About Sex Offenders" (August 2000).

⁷ ATSA, "Fact Sheet: Risk Assessments" accessed from <http://www.atsa.com/ppAssessment.html> February 5, 2010.

⁸ Kim English, et al, "The Value of Polygraph Testing in Sex Offender Management" (Dec. 2000).

State Sex Offender Laws

STATE	STATEWIDE RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS	STATUTORY GPS MONITORING FOR CERTAIN OFFENDERS	SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT/POLICY BOARD	CIVIL COMMITMENT
Alabama	✓	✓		
Alaska				
Arizona	✓	✓		✓
Arkansas	✓	✓		
California	✓	✓	✓	✓
Colorado			✓	
Connecticut				
Delaware		✓	✓	
Florida	✓	✓		✓
Georgia	✓	✓		
Hawaii				
Idaho	✓	✓		
Illinois	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indiana	✓	✓		
Iowa	✓	✓		✓
Kansas				✓
Kentucky	✓			
Louisiana	✓	✓		
Maine				
Maryland	✓			
Massachusetts		✓	✓	✓
Michigan	✓	✓		
Minnesota				✓
Mississippi	✓	✓		
Missouri	✓	✓		✓
Montana		✓		
Nebraska	✓	✓		✓
Nevada				
New Hampshire				✓
New Jersey		✓		✓
New Mexico		✓	✓	
New York	✓			✓
North Carolina	✓	✓		
North Dakota		✓		✓
Ohio	✓	✓		
Oklahoma	✓	✓		
Oregon	✓	✓	✓	
Pennsylvania				✓*Juveniles only
Rhode Island		✓		
South Carolina	✓	✓		
South Dakota	✓	✓		
Tennessee	✓	✓	✓	
Texas		✓	✓	✓*Outpatient only
Utah				
Vermont				
Virginia	✓	✓		✓
Washington	✓	✓	✓	✓
West Virginia	✓	✓		
Wisconsin		✓		✓
Wyoming				
Wyoming				