Premises on which sex offender policies are based:

- All sex offenders reoffend
- All sex offenders equally dangerous
- Sex offenders are more dangerous than other criminals
- Sex crime rates are on the rise
- Treatment doesn’t work
- Stranger Danger

- 193 citizens of driving age
- Melbourne, Florida
- late summer 2005
- Melbourne is located in Brevard County, on the central east coast of Florida, about an hour from the Kennedy Space Center.

- Females were slightly over-represented (57%)
- mean age = 37 years old.
- median income = between $30,000 and $40,000.
- Ethnicity
  - 69% Caucasian
  - 11% African-American
  - 14% Hispanic
  - 2.7% Asian
- Average of 14 years of education.
## Public Perceptions

### All sex offenders reoffend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What percentage of sex offenders commit another sex offense?</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>20.22</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percentage of child molesters reoffend?</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>20.64</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percentage of rapists reoffend?</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>21.70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percentage of sex offenders come to the attention of authorities?</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>18.83</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30, 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sex offender policies 

April 2008
Myth:
All sex offenders reoffend

Fact: recidivism rates are much lower than commonly believed

• 5.3% over 3 years (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003)

• 14% over 4-6 years (Hanson & Bussiere, 1998; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Recidivism Rate</th>
<th>Definition of recidivism</th>
<th>Follow-up period</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hanson &amp; Bussierre (1998)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Charges or convictions</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>29,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sex offenders</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child molesters</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapists</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hanson &amp; Morton-Bourgon (2005)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Charges or convictions</td>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>19,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sex offenders</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harris &amp; Hanson (2004)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Charges or convictions</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>4,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sex offenders</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incestuous molesters</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child molesters / girl victims</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child molesters / boy victims</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapists</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bureau of Justice Statistics (2003)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>arrests</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>9,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sex offenders</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sex offender policies

April 2008
Myth: All sex offenders are the same
Facts: (Harris & Hanson, 2004)

Table 2
Sexual Recidivism (%) across Time and Samples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Group</th>
<th>5 Years</th>
<th>10 Years</th>
<th>15 Years</th>
<th>Shown in Figure #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All sexual offenders</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapists</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Incest Child Molesters</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Girl Victim” Child Molesters</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Boy Victim” Child Molesters</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offenders without a previous sexual conviction</td>
<td>Without</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>versus those with a previous sexual conviction</td>
<td>With</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offenders over age 50 at release</td>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>versus offenders less than age 50 at release</td>
<td>Less than 50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Offenders - offence free in the community</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for Five, Ten, and Fifteen years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>†</td>
<td>†</td>
<td>†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† = Insufficient data to compute reliable estimates

(2 or more convictions)
Harris and Hanson (2004)

- N = 4,724; 15 year follow up period:
- “Most sexual offenders do not re-offend sexually over time. This may be the most important finding of this study as this finding is contrary to some strongly held beliefs. After 15 years, 76% of sexual offenders had not been charged with, or convicted of, another sexual offence. The sample was sufficiently large that very strong contradictory evidence is necessary to substantially change these recidivism estimates” (p. 17).
Some sex offenders are more dangerous than others

- Pedophiles who molest boys: 35-52%
- Rapists of adult women: 19-39%
- Incest offenders: < 10% - 13%
- Repeat offenders are more likely to reoffend than first-time offenders.
- Those who comply with probation and treatment have lower reoffense rates than those who violate the conditions of their release.
- Sex offenders who target strangers are more dangerous than those with victims inside their own family.
• Sex offender is a legal term.

• All sex offenders are not the same.

• Sex offenders are a heterogeneous group.

• Sexual deviance and dangerousness exist on a continuum.

20 year old with 15 year old girlfriend
Predatory repeat pedophile with 20 child victims
## Myth or Fact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent agree or strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abuse only occurs in low socio-economic classes.</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex offense rates are on the rise.</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and drugs play a moderate or major role in sex offending.</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex offenders reoffend at much higher rates compared to other criminals.</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fact:
Sex crime rates have declined.

- Sex crime rates, like other serious, non-sexual crimes (e.g., assault, robbery), have declined substantially over the past decade, based on both official crime reports and victim reports (Tonry, 2004).

- Rape arrest rates peaked in 1990 and have decreased steadily since 1991.

- The 2001 rate for forcible rape was 9.6 per 100,000, the lowest rate recorded since national record-keeping practices were implemented (Maguire & Pastore, 2003).

- It might be argued that the drop in crime rates is a direct result of increasingly aggressive crime policies, but sociological and criminological scholars assert that such trends are more likely a result of society’s changing values and social norms (Tonry, 2004).
• Some forms of child maltreatment decreased again from 2004 to 2005, adding to over a decade’s worth of declines, according to data from the US Department of Health and Human Services.

• Rates of substantiated sexual abuse dropped by 2% in 2005 compared to the previous year, capping a 51% total decline since 1991.
Myth: Sex crime rates are on the rise.

Source: BJS National Crime Victimization Survey, 2005
Reasons:

- Economic Prosperity in 90s
- More social workers and detectives; improvements in investigations
- Longer sentences
- Better community supervision
- Anti-depressant drugs

- Community protection policies may have contributed to the decline, but
- Sex crime rates were on a downward trend prior to the implementation of Megan’s Law.

"Megan's Law is riding the coattails of the natural downward trend," said Kristen Zgoba, a NJ Corrections Department researcher who is studying the effectiveness of community notification.
Fact:
Alcohol & Drugs

- Past substance abuse had 0 correlation with recidivism (Hanson & Busierre).
- Ongoing substance abuse can be a dynamic risk factor for recidivism, as it impairs judgment and lowers inhibitions.
Are sex offenders the most dangerous type of criminal?

• The U.S. Department of Justice (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002).
  • burglary (74%)
  • larceny (75%)
  • auto theft (70%)
  • DUI (51%)
  • Sex offenders 5.3%
DUI offenders: 51% recidivism

• Proposed legislation:
  Drunk drivers prohibited from living 2500 feet from establishments that sell alcohol
Myth: Sex offenders are more dangerous than other criminals.

Fact:

- Sex offenders have lower reoffense rates than other criminals.
  - BJS (2002)
  - Sample & Bray (2003; 2006)
Myth: Sex offenders are more dangerous than other criminals.

- Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003:

“So compared to non-sex offenders released from State prisons, released sex offenders were 4 times more likely to be rearrested for a sex crime.”
Not true that sex offenders are re-arrested at rates four times those of other criminals.
Within the first 3 years following their release from prison in 1994, 5.3% (517 of the 9,691) of released sex offenders were rearrested for a sex crime. Out of 262,420 released non-sex offenders, 1.3% (3,328) were rearrested for a sex crime.

“Compared to non-sex offenders released from State prisons, released sex offenders were 4 times more likely to be rearrested for a sex crime.”
Myth: Treatment doesn’t work
- Public perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent answering</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“somewhat true”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“completely true”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sex offenders who receive specialized psychological treatment will reoffend. | 192 | 50% |
Myth: Treatment Doesn’t Work
Facts: Treatment can help

- **Furby, Weinrott, & Bradshaw (1989).**
  - Combined analysis of numerous studies that was unable to detect a significant treatment effect due to methodology variability.

- **Hanson, R. K., Gordon, A., Harris, A. J. R., Marques, J. K., Murphy, W., Quinsey, V. L., & Seto, M. C. (2002).**
  - 17% untreated
  - 10% treated
  - Equivalent to a 40% reduction

- **Losen, F., & Schmucker, M. (2005).**
  - Recidivism reduced by nearly 40%

- **SOTEP:**
  - No overall differences between treated and untreated groups, but:
    - Sex offenders who successfully completed the SOTEP treatment program reoffended at lower rates than those who did not demonstrate that they “got it” (Marques, Miederanders, Day, Nelson, & van Ommeren, 2005).
Can they be cured?

- Treatment won’t work equally well for everyone, and 100% success should not be expected.

- Sex offender treatments, like many other types of medical and mental health interventions, don’t focus on a cure but on a reduction of symptoms.

- Treatment for diabetes doesn’t cure the disease, it manages the disease.

- Treatment for schizophrenia doesn’t cure psychosis, it reduces symptoms and allows people to function more adequately.

- Chemotherapies may not ultimately prevent all cancer fatalities but may increase life expectancy and quality of life for many patients.

- Sex offender treatment teaches clients how to change their thinking and their behavior, and many are able and willing to do so and avoid reoffense.
Effect Sizes

- Effect sizes measure the magnitude of the ability of an intervention to increase or decrease a specified outcome.

- The statistical significance of the effect size indicates whether the benefit of an intervention goes beyond what would be expected by chance.

- Generally, it is accepted that effect sizes less than .20 are small, those in the range of .50 are moderate, and those above .80 are considered large (Cohen, 1988).

  - 17% untreated
  - 10% treated
  - Equivalent to a 40% reduction (effect size = .40)
Digression: Other effect sizes

  - Bypass surgery for artery blockage = .15
  - Chemotherapy for breast cancer = .08
  - Aspirin for heart problems = .03
Digression: other effect sizes

- Meyer, Finn, Eyde, Kay, Moreland, Dies, Eisman, Kubiszyn, & Reed (2001)
  - Relapse prevention on improvement in substance abusers is cited as .14
  - Anti-inflammatory drugs have only a .14 correlation with pain reduction.
  - Nicotine patches demonstrate a correlation of .18 with smoking cessation
Digression: other effect sizes

- Clozapine and its relationship to improvement in schizophrenia = .20
  - General knowledge is that only two thirds of patients with Schizophrenia respond to meds.

- Even Viagra, commonly thought of as a miracle drug, demonstrated only a moderate correlation with improved male sexual functioning (r = .38).

- Illustratively, the r squared (.14) indicates that Viagra accounts for only 14% of the variance in improvement in sexual functioning. Thus, statistical significance does not imply substantive significance.
### Myth: Stranger Danger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What percentage of sex assaults of adults are committed by strangers?</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>20.44</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percentage of boys are abused by someone they know?</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>24.59</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percentage of girls are abused by someone they know?</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>22.39</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Myth: Stranger Danger
Fact: 7% of child sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by strangers.

- About 40% of sexual assaults take place in the victim’s own home, and 20% take place in the home of a friend, neighbor or relative (BJS, 1997).
- About .7% of all murders involve sexual assault.
- The prevalence of sexual murders declined by about half between the late 1970’s and the mid 1990’s (BJS, 1997).
- About 75% of sexual murder victims are over the age of 18 (BJS, 1997).
Stranger Danger

- It is estimated that about 100 stranger abductions of children occur in the United States each year (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2005).

- By comparison, over 500 children under age 15 were killed in 2003 by drunk drivers (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2004).

- Over 1100 children died in 2002 as a result of physical abuse or neglect at the hands of their own parents or caretakers (Child Welfare League of America, 2003).
Beliefs about sentencing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many years do you believe that sex offenders should serve in prison?</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.80</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>34.761</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many months of treatment should sex offenders receive in prison?</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.96</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>48.273</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many months of treatment should sex offenders receive after prison?</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>47.52</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>40.032</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many years should sex offenders be on probation?</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
<td>41.92</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>39.638</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Question</td>
<td>Published Data</td>
<td>Offender Mean %</td>
<td>t-value Offenders</td>
<td>Public Mean %</td>
<td>t-value Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percent of sexual assaults of adults do you believe were committed by strangers?</td>
<td>27%a</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>2.6**</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>15.2***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percentage of sex offenders do you believe come to the attention of the authorities?</td>
<td>36%b</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>3.27***</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>7.84***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percent of adult sexual offenders do you believe were sexually abused as children?</td>
<td>28%c</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>10.44***</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>25.7***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percent of convicted sex offenders do you believe will commit another sexual offense?</td>
<td>14%d,e</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4.5***</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>41.18***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percent of rapists do you believe re-offend in a sexual manner?</td>
<td>20%d</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>5.87***</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>34.64***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What percent of child molesters do you believe re-offend in a sexual manner?</td>
<td>13%d</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6.99***</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>42.31***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: t-value represents the difference between each group’s mean response and published data.

a (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002)
b (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005); 36% represents report estimates for victims over age 12.
c (Hanson & Slater, 1988)
d (Hanson & Bussiere, 1998)
e (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005)
• Random acts of sexual violence, especially against children, generate enormous media coverage.

• Sexual abuse causes great harm to victims, so our society is rightly concerned about it.

• The media reports many inaccurate facts about sex offenders.

• The public is largely misinformed about sex offenders, particularly about recidivism rates and the threat that strangers pose to children.

• This misinformation leads to fear and urgency to create laws to prevent sex crimes.

• Lawmakers act to serve their constituency, and policies are often enacted in the absence of empirical evidence.
The role of the media

- There is a link between exposure to media reports about sex crimes and an individual’s awareness of sexual violence and support of community protection policies (Proctor et al., 2002; Sample, 2001; Sample & Kadleck, 2006).


- News coverage of sex crimes and sex offenders increased 128% during that time frame.

- A Google News search using the keyword “sex offender” conducted on September 9, 2006 for U.S. news articles that were published in the preceding 30 days yielded 4490 hits.
The role of the media

- **Sample and Kadleck (2006)**
  - Themes of high recidivism rates were consistently apparent throughout the articles.
  - Portrayals of sex offenders as persistent in their behavior despite punishment and rehabilitation.
  - Another disturbing trend was an “increase in news accounts of sexually-motivated homicide [which] could well support public perceptions that sex offending is often synonymous with murder” (p. 20).
  - The media can “affect public perception regarding the prevalence of sex crimes by over-reporting single incidents of behavior” (p. 8).
The role of the media (Sample & Kadlec, 2008)

- Interviewed 25 politicians in Illinois, who agreed that sex offenders were a “growing” problem.

- Most politicians described sex offenders as “sick,” commonly characterizing them as compulsive, persistent, and irredeemable, and none thought that rehabilitation was possible.

- When asked how they customarily obtained knowledge regarding sex offenders, the politicians cited the media as by far their primary source.

- Thus, the media appears to play a leading role in shaping opinion both among politicians and their constituents. As a result, public policies are proposed which are designed ostensibly to protect the public but which are more likely to promote only an illusion of safety.
Recommendations
for
Evidence-based policy:

What can we do to combat sexual violence?
Evidence-based policy

- Social policies designed to prevent sexual violence will be most effective when they are informed by scientific data about
  - recidivism
  - risk assessment
  - needs of criminal offenders
  - therapeutic interventions
  - community management strategies
Recommendations for evidence-based policy

- Social policies designed to prevent sexual violence will be most effective when they are informed by scientific data about sex offense patterns, recidivism, risk, assessment, therapeutic interventions, and community management strategies.

- One-size-fits-all policies are not cost-efficient, nor are they likely to afford utmost protection to the public.

- Grove and Meehl (1996) warned that failing to apply research evidence to decision-making may have grave consequences for individuals and communities.

- They advocated for the use of empirical methods to inform the development of social policy and intervention services, and argued that to do otherwise is not only inefficient, but unethical (Grove & Meehl, 1996).

Risk-based classification systems

- Risk assessment allows screening offenders into relative risk categories and applying the most restrictive and intensive interventions to the most dangerous.

- Unintended consequences and obstacles to reintegration can be minimized for lower risk offenders.

- Broad policies or offense based classification systems are likely to be overly inclusive and dilute the public’s ability to identify dangerous offenders.
Risk-based classification systems

- Empirically derived and validated risk assessment instruments (e.g. Static-99)

- Risk Factors associated with recidivism

- Better definitions of predator (similar to criteria for civil commitment)
  - Paraphilia
  - Likely to reoffend
Adam Walsh Act

- **Tier I**: Predicate offenses include whatever offenses do not support a higher classification, such as misdemeanor registration offenses and child pornography possession.

- **Tier II**: Predicate offenses include most felonious sexual abuse or sexual exploitation crimes involving victims who are minors.

- **Tier III**: Predicate offenses generally encompass sexual assaults involving sexual acts regardless of victim age, sexual contact offenses against children below the age of 13, nonparental kidnapping of minors, and attempts or conspiracies to commit such offenses.

- Requires juveniles as young as 14 to register.
Treatment programs should be a mandatory component or legislation designed to combat sexual violence.

- Treated sex offenders reoffend nearly 40% less often than those who do not receive treatment.

- Collaborative approaches to treatment, monitoring, and supervision (“containment models”) have been proven effective and cost-efficient in other states (CO).
Collaborative approach to treatment and community supervision

- Collaborative risk management approaches evaluate individual offender’s risks and needs, reinforce their strengths, and facilitate support systems.

- Therapists and probation officers work together to assess risk and develop case management plans.

- Treatment and supervision plans are tailored to target the offender’s specific offense patterns and risk factors.

- Polygraph examination
  - History disclosure
  - Monitoring / Maintenance
The definition of a “Sexual Predator” should more clearly distinguish such offenders as discussed below.

• The Kansas sexually violent predator act, for example, defines “predatory acts” are those “directed towards strangers or individuals with whom relationships have been established or promoted for the primary purpose of victimization”.

• In some states, the definition includes criteria involving the use of violence, weapons, or causing injury during the commission of a sex crime, or those offenders who have had multiple victims.

• Repeat offenders, and those who have committed abduction of children or adults for sexual purposes should be considered should be considered predators.

• Such definitions are more consistent with the term “sexually violent predator” as defined in civil commitment proceedings, which require a convicted sex offender to have a mental abnormality (DSM diagnosis) predisposing him to a likelihood of future sexually violent crimes.
Loitering zones or Child safety zones

- Prohibit sex offenders from hanging out in places where they can cultivate relationships with children and groom potential victims.
GPS monitoring

- Can be a useful tracking tool for high risk or predatory offenders
- Not necessary or cost effective for all sex offenders
- May act as a deterrent in some cases but cannot prevent sex crimes.
- Can detect where someone is, but not what he is doing
Public education

- Parents should be made aware of the signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse, and the common types of grooming patterns used by perpetrators who gain access to victims via their positions of trust or authority.

- Factual data about recidivism rates and the heterogeneity of sex offenders would help reduce the fear that often accompanies community notification.

- The media play a crucial role in public education, and should be enlisted as responsible partners in the dissemination of accurate information.

- “It does not help the child maltreatment field or the public and policymakers to see child molesters as simply incorrigibly compulsive fiends who cannot be stopped” (Finkelhor, 2003, p. 1227).
Prevention

- Monies spent on sex offender laws that show little effect take away from funding for victim services.
- There is a relationship between early maltreatment and future violent behavior.
- Protective services and foster care programs are often poorly funded and understaffed.
- Investing in treatment and social services for today’s abused children is the best strategy for preventing potential victims of the future.
Research should be prioritized

- Funding should be prioritized for policy analyses, at local, state, and federal levels.

- Continuous evaluation should be conducted and laws that fail to succeed in meeting intended goals should be reviewed and modified.

- Research should include investigation of effectiveness and unintended consequences.
Evidence based social policy can lead to safer communities.

- Social policies designed to prevent sexual violence will be most effective when they are informed by scientific data about sex offense patterns, recidivism, risk, assessment, therapeutic interventions, and community management strategies.
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