

welcome to sex offender island

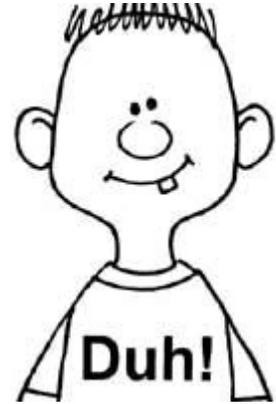


Written by bubba



So happy to see that **Georgia is toughening their sex offender laws.** Beginning July 1st, all convicted sex offenders in Georgia will be disallowed from "living, working or loitering within 1,000 feet of schools, churches, parks, gyms, swimming pools or one of the state's 150,000 school bus stops." It always makes me feel better to know that we, as a collective society, believe that people can rise above, that the intentions of most are pure, that people are capable of change and that opportunities can and are spread evenly in our country. Not.

Ok what's going on here? Is Georgia promoting child and community safeguards that the rest of the states should pay close attention to or have they just fouled out with a flagrant violation of the most basic, unalienable right outlined in the Declaration of Independence...a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? *Yawn...*It's the latter my friends and I cannot tell you how sick I get when we put into policy paradoxal laws that are fundamentally at odds with the precise outcomes they aim to achieve. Laws like this aren't going to solve a god damn thing except drive the offenders away from drawing attention to themselves. I predict that institutionalizing the general public's ability to treat another person as a social pariah will only decrease the self-reporting of sex offender registries and cause an increase in disconnectedness between society and sex offenders. That's a lose/lose for those of you not keeping score.

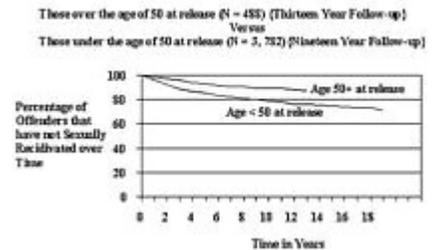


But do I think sex offenders should be allowed to live by schools, by bus stops, by churches and even across the street? God damn right I do. *But these guys have committed horrific crimes...why am I so concerned how they're treated as a result?* Because I hate hypocrisy, that's why. We expect a lot from these people once they're back on the streets. We expect them to behave, abide by laws and get jobs...basically act like the rest of us, right? *Right.* Well, right except for a few things. Right except for the 'rest of us' don't have our records, pictures and home addresses

publicly posted on the internet, don't have to worry about being picketed and don't have cities and states passing laws about where we can and can't live. Uh oh. Paradox.

Look, we empirically know that **sex offenders have a high rate of re-offending**, but on the other hand we do nothing to facilitate the ease of integration into a life more ordinary. Instead, we pass laws designed to shine a high beam on those we ask, nay, *expect* to behave responsibly then activate community fear and authorize public prejudice around them. This creates an increase in barriers to normal functioning and a decrease in the likelihood that a person can actually begin to think of himself as someone capable of changing, someone capable of more. Why is that a difficult concept for so many? Bottom line – if you want someone to act normal, you've got to treat them normal.

Sexual Recidivism in a Sample of Sexual Offenders



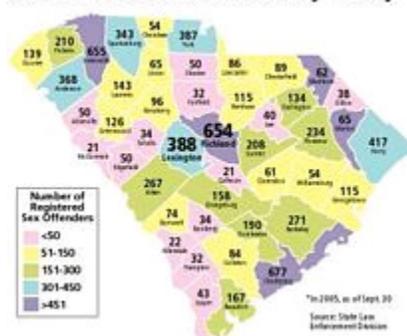
So as not to enrage too many new parents, I'll put out there that I believe the real target for policy reform should probably focus on recidivism & therefore sentencing. Let's face it, most data says that sex offenders are not rehabilitate-able (yes, new word). Yet I've never heard a life sentence with no chance for parole issued to a sex offender. Maybe it's happened, but it certainly isn't the norm. Hey, if we think they're

 incapable of rehabilitating, we should leave them locked up. *There is your target for public outcry – not the person who did everything the courts said they had to do to make amends and now lives around the corner from you.*

Herein lies our problem; in theory, we state that after a person serves their sentence, they are free to go on with their lives. Certainly some crimes require that a person have a test-period...probation or parole. It's a way for them to prove that what we've decided they're worthy of – freedom, is truly something they are capable of handling. That test-period is set up to be managed by a relationship between the ex-offender and their probation or parole officer – not the general public. It is an ex-convicts job to stay clean and check in with their monitoring officer. It is their officer's job to keep a responsible tab on the ex-con. It is your job to mind your god damn business and live your life without inhibiting the lives of others. We don't have marshal law in this country and you haven't been deputized to extend and enforce the policies of San Quentin on the residents of your own block...whoever they may be.



Number of S.C. Sex Offenders by County*



In fact, you shouldn't even know where sex offenders live if you ask me. Not a popular opinion, yes, this I know. But why does it make you a better parent to know where John Q child molester lives? Why would it change your parenting behavior? Be a good parent anyway. Know where your kids are anyway. It shouldn't augment your parental duties and oversight whether you know that a convicted, punished and released sex offender lives next door or just somewhere in the same zip code. Beyond that, you certainly shouldn't have the right to do some of the things laws like this one have promoted, like pasting the face of a known offender on every telephone pole in a neighborhood, demanding that a person move out of a community or protesting at someone's

house...just because they live there. Why do you have so much time on your hands?

So listen (s)ex-offenders, beware. Though you may be under the impression that we believe you can be normal and that's why we let you out of prison, think again. Here's what we really think – a crime of such deviance grants us an invisible lifetime pass to not just monitor your behavior, but to actively involve ourselves in your life, making your day to day routine as difficult as possible...and we can do that because of what you did. We're not committed to helping you get better. Rather, we're committed to issuing a non-stop stream of judgment and barriers that will disallow you from ever feeling as though you have any characteristics whatsoever that make you a valuable, contributing part of our society. We're collectively obsessed with the moral lifestyles of others - and that means yours. The categorical acknowledgement of 'deviance' helps us remind ourselves that we reside in the house of 'normal' and are therefore warranted in casting judgment on the world of 'just plain wrong' - that too means you. Don't forget. we want gay marriage to be illegal, adoption by same sex parents to be an abomination, and the ability to wave a magic wand and transform welfare mothers into soccer moms, non-English speaking newcomers to NASCAR watching taxpayers.



And, yes, we want to punish you for life because it helps us feel normal and it helps us feel safe. Good luck. We'll be watching.



p.s. - What we don't want to do is be responsible for letting other people live their lives while we focus on our own. Because it just makes more sense to change the rest of the world...doesn't it?

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