

Urgent Action Alert

US Congress holds a hearing on the Sex Offender Registration & Notification Act (SORNA)

Make Your Voice Heard! Call Congress.

THE ISSUE:

In 2006, the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate are discussing legislation that may require youth adjudicated delinquent of sexual offenses to register on a national sex offender registry list. H.R. 4472, the final House bill, requires youth in the juvenile justice system to register on the national sex offender registry (and also on state registries that currently exclude juvenile adjudications). S. 1086, the final Senate bill, excludes juvenile offenders from the registry list. Members of Congress need to hear from their constituents that the House bill ignores the research showing that youth sex offenders have low re-offense rates (3-8%), over 90% of arrests of children for sex offenses represent a one-time event that will never recur, that they are highly responsive to treatment, that adding juveniles to the national registry list would only cause confusion as to which offenders pose real threats to public safety, and is an unnecessary and counterproductive intrusion into state jurisdiction over juvenile matters.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Contact your Representative or Senator by calling the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and faxing letters to their offices. Fax numbers and other information are available at <http://capwiz.com/cj/home/>. Please urge them to support language excluding juvenile offenders from the national sex offender registry and to share these concerns with members of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. Suggested points to make:

- I'm calling to urge you to support Senate language excluding juvenile offenders from a national sex offender registry and to urge members of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees to support the Senate language in House/Senate negotiations.
- I am deeply concerned about public safety. The research shows that juvenile offenders have a very low recidivism rate and are highly responsive to treatment.
- By including juveniles on the national registry, we confuse the public and impede youth sex offenders from rehabilitating and becoming productive members of society.
- States are better equipped and have adequate legislation to fully address juvenile sex offenders. We do not need increased federalization of these issues.
- Again, I urge Representative or Senator [insert name] to adopt the Senate language keeping juveniles off a national sex offender registry and to contact House and Senate Judiciary Committee members.

For more information: Please contact Elizabeth Kehoe, National Juvenile Defender Center, 202-452-0010 x103, ekehoe@njdc.info or Sarah Bryer, National Juvenile Justice Network, 202.467.0864 x105, bryer@juvjustice.org.