

MN Law currently allows children as young as 10 years of age to be registered as a Predator Offender.

Throughout the meetings of the POR Working group, there was considerable discussion on the extremely difficult challenge of children who have caused sexual harm. We all agree that we want to hold children with problematic sexual behavior (PSB) accountable and ensure that they receive monitoring and treatment, community supervision, family counseling and emerging tools. However, we did not agree on a decision to remove them from the list.

There is strong research to show that treatment is effective at reducing sexual reoffending. For instance, low (i.e.2%) sexual recidivism rates in children have been demonstrated in a 10 year follow up study of a randomized clinical trial of a short term, community based PSB specific cognitive behavioral treatment condition.¹ A meta-analysis reviewing 107 studies found that across behavior type, over 97% of children charged with sexual offenses never harm sexually again.²

There is also research to show that registering children and publicly labelling them as sex offenders causes significant harm ranging from educational discrimination to ostracism, vigilantism, homelessness, and a higher rate of suicide (hopelessness).³All of which are associated with sexual re-offense.

In contrast to adults with illegal sexual behaviors, youth with problematic sexual behavior tend to have fewer victims than adults, the acts are more likely to be impulsive, situational, and transient, and most do not demonstrate deviant sexual arousal or sexual interest in children much younger than themselves.⁴

The truth is: for most juveniles who engage in sexually aggressive behavior, it is not the start of a lifelong pattern.⁵

We have learned a lot about sexual offending since Registration of Sex Offenders was first introduced in Minnesota and nationally. We ask that the legislature consider further discussion on taking children off the registry based on volumes of research and community safety models.

¹ (PSB-CBT; Carpentier, Silovsky, Chaffin, 2006

² Chaffin, M. (2008). Our Minds Are Made Up - Don't Confuse Us with the Facts: Commentary on Policies Concerning Teen and Preteen Juvenile Sex Offenders. *Child Maltreatment*, 13, 110-121.

³ Letourneau, E. J., Harris, A. J., Shields, R. T., Walfield, S. M., Ruzicka, A. E., Buckman, C., Kahn, G. D., & Nair, R. (2018). Effects of juvenile sex offender registration on adolescent well-being: An empirical examination. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 24(1), 105–117. <https://doi.org/10.1037/law0000155>

⁴ Chaffin, M., Berliner, L., Block, R., Johnson, T. C., Friedrich, W., Louis, D., Lyon, T. D., Page, J., Prescott, D., & Silovsky, J.F. (2008). Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers Task Force Report on Children with Sexual Behavior Problems. *Child Maltreatment*, 13, 199-218.

⁵ Caldwell, M (2016) Quantifying the decline in juvenile sexual recidivism rates. *Psychology Public Policy and Law*. Vol. 22. No. 4, 414-426