An Examination of Sex Offense and Sex Offense Policies:

An Annotated Bibliography

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Though the sex offender registry might lower the opportunity cost of perpetrating sex crimes, it has neither served to lower offense nor recidivism rates. Data collected in this study coincides with other data in this bibliography; property values decrease based on proximity to a sex offender, sex offender recidivism rates are not positively affected by enactment of sex offender registries. Researchers used state data, phone and email communication with representatives, and information from the Klaas Kids Foundation. This source evaluates the effects of online sex offender databases and includes key statistics on the introduction of sex offender registries.


The chart summarizes state-based adult sex offender registration laws for temporary or visiting offenders specifically. This work elaborates on the sex offender registration laws outlined in the NICCSA (n.d.) document. Authors collated sex offense legislation in August 2018 along with information gathered in conversations with legislators and registration officials.


Overinclusive zoning laws are detrimental, wasting the time and funds of states and their employees. They also create a false sense of security for community members since most sex
Sex offenses are committed by acquaintances and family members in non-public areas (Colombino, N., Mercado, C. C., and Jeglic, E. L., 2009). Bagley speaks about how zoning policies drive sex offenders to less regulated, rural areas; this argument parallels the increase in sex offenders observed in Wyoming (Chicago Tribune, 2007). Research for this work was conducted by evaluating the existing literature. Bagley’s work makes meaning of residence restriction laws explained in the bibliography.


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Current sex offense policies have no marked impact on incidence nor recidivism of sex crimes. The collateral consequences of these policies can be severe. Vigilante justice, isolation, employment barriers, and a false sense of security for laypeople are all collateral consequences of current sex offender legislation. Hughes, L. A., and Kadleck (2008) and Bagley, A. L. (2008) parallel this argument. For this work, Bonnar-Kidd collected and reviewed data on sex offense (specifically in the United States). The author suggests that funding be allocated to rehabilitative efforts for sex offenders, counseling for at-risk youth, educational programs, and victim assistance.


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While adult sex offense perpetration is also most likely to occur in private, semi-public and public perpetrations are about doubly likely to occur against adults compared to children. Those perpetrating against adults are most likely to meet the victims in a semi-public location. In light of these findings, the authors of this research critique the efficacy of current residence restriction laws, citing overgeneralization as a key problem. This argument aligns with that of Zgoba, Levenson, and McKee (2009). The study used a convenience sample of 405 male perpetrators released from prison between 1996 and 2006 whose ages ranged from 14 to 71 years. A majority of participants were African American (43.2%) or white (33.6%). Using descriptive analysis, researchers investigated the nature of sex offenses. Colombino, Mercado, and Jeglic explored environmental factors involved in sex crimes. Though the public traditionally associates sex crime perpetration with large white vans and mysterious figures trying to coerce children (hence the “stranger danger” adage), data indicates that strangers are not the primary perpetrators of these types of crimes.


According to the article, because of the influx of sex offenders emigrating to Wyoming from other parts of the country, state residents are more susceptible to dangers associated with sex offenders. The emigration on the part of the offenders is due in part to the loose restrictions. The author insinuates that the lack of residence restrictions put lay people at greater risk; research conducted for this report suggests that the opposite may be true. (More restrictions lead to greater isolation and an increased risk of recidivism). The author of the article includes brief comments
from state representatives (i.e. Attorney General, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, etc.). This source serves to acknowledge the perceptions of sex offenders and sex offender policy by Wyoming state representatives; additionally, it provides statistical data accurate to the article’s year of publishing.


This resource provides a brief overview of many sex offender-related topics, such as the purpose of the sex offender registry, sex offender re-offense rates, and information about the characteristics of perpetrators. Like in other texts, this source addresses the misconception that victims are most often strangers to the perpetrator. Additionally, the source notes that there is no evidence proving the effectiveness of residence restriction policies (this will be discussed further throughout the bibliography). This source references other peer-reviewed journals as well as the data collected by the Center for Sex Offender Management. This piece provides a basic overview of sexual offending that includes relevant statistics. It also introduces various policies pertaining to sexual offense prevention and public safety.


Treatment decisions need to be based on each specific sex offense case; yet, clinicians need to develop streamlined criteria for determining the dosage of treatment. Like in many other works within the bibliography, researchers find that sex offender policies and treatments are
overgeneralized and lack a common set of standards. The researcher evaluates current literature and data surrounding sex offender treatment—specifically, its intensity and timing.


This source asserts that a vast majority of sexual offenders are not strangers to the child. This assertion is supported by all other sources contained within the bibliography. The information gathered for this text is a compilation of statistics and past research. The source provides statistical data regarding the sex offender’s relationship to the victim/survivor.


Positive criminology is an effective way of framing sex offender treatment. Akin to the findings of many other studies within the bibliography, data from this work suggests that recidivism is reduced by positive social interactions and integration. Researchers integrated a qualitative research format with the positive criminology framework to identify internal and external resiliencies for sex offenders. Study participants included 38 male inmates in Israel. The framework emphasizes humanistic strengths and personal protective factors and attributes. One core doctrine within positive criminology is reintegrative shaming, which encourages the sex offender to detach their identity from the actions; this process is carried out by simultaneously attaching a negative meaning to the offense and re-welcoming the participant back into the
community. The second key component in the framework is social acceptance, which entails forgiveness and acceptance of the sex offender into familiar, positive systems such as religious groups, family units, and friendships. This process of inclusion is the result of a reduction in negative labeling, which ultimately reduces criminal behavior.


The Good Lives Model is a strength-based framework that was originally designed for adult sex offenders but serves as an effective framework for the treatment of youth offenders. Per the GLM, legislation as it applies to youth offenders should encourage social integration and habilitation rather than isolation. Additionally, courts should consider the cognitive, psychosocial, and emotional needs of each youth. The researcher reviews risk factors for youth offenders at an individual, social, and familial level. Fortune conducted an analysis of existing data on the Good Lives Model. The researcher evaluates its pertinence to youth offenders from a theoretical perspective. The framework encourages individuals to develop their own goals and seeks to identify ways in which these goals can be achieved using a pro-social modus. The Good Lives Model promotes greater understanding and community cohesion as a result of its inclusive, listening-based dogma.


Rapists are more likely to be re-arrested for non-sexual crimes while child molesters are more likely to be re-convicted for sexual offenses. Rapists are motivated by anger and violence
whereas child molestation is precipitated by sexual deviancy. Rapists and child molesters were both re-arrested relatively infrequently. This is congruent with data that indicates that sex offenders have lower re-arrest rates for any crime than other types of offenders (Langan, P. A., Schmitt, E. L., & Durose, M. R., 2003). Freeman retrieved data from the New York sex offender registry and the New York criminal history database. Treatment should target the nuances of each type of sex offense in order to effectively reduce recidivism.


Sex offenders are twice as likely to be rearrested when subjected to community notification. Individuals previously convicted as sex offenders are more likely to be rearrested if they are non-white, young, living in rural or midsize communities, have additional convictions and/or incarcerations, and/or have violated supervision conditions. Freeman’s finding that older sex offenders are less likely to be rearrested is consistent with the work of Langan, P. A., Schmitt, E. L., & Durose, M. R. (2003). The research of Harris, A. J., Levenson, J. S., & Ackerman, A. R. (2014) agrees with Freeman’s finding that most sex offenders are white. In the quasi-experimental design, researchers compared re-arrest rates among sex offenders subject to community notification and those who were not. Though sex offenders have a high susceptibility to re-arrest due to community notification laws, Langan & Durose suggest that sex offenders are less likely to be re-arrested than non-sex offenders (2013). Participants in the study were male registered sex offenders in New York State, with an age range from 14 to 91 and an average age of 33 years (17,165 participants). 63.6% of participants were white, 30.6% were black, and 1.4%
identified as Indian or Asian. Freeman outlines risk factors for rearrests of individuals previously convicted of a sex crime and explores the impact of community notification on re-arrest rates.


According to Geiger and Fischer, individuals convicted of child molestation espouse sexually liberality. Conversely, those convicted of date rape operate under traditional patriarchal standards. Researchers conducted semi-structured individual interviews of sex offenders in Israel. Interviews were conducted only with sex offenders whose victims were acquaintances. This study documents the verbatim accounts of Israeli sex offenders. These interviews include sex offenders’ understandings of both their sexuality and the nature of their crimes.


Because the Good Lives Model framework is driven by the discovery and pursuit of the individual’s goals, it is ethically appealing. Glaser expounds on the assertions about the GLM made by Fortune (2018). The researcher expounds upon and agrees with the assertions made by Fortune (2018). Glaser evaluated existing literature and data on paternalism and the Good Lives Model. Interestingly, Glaser notes that there is a distinct subcategory of sex offenders that, unlike many offenders, do not struggle to identify and achieve their goals; instead, these perpetrators have achieved influence and success enough to continue victimizing vulnerable peoples.

Ultimately, the study’s authors assert that recidivism reduction programs should target sex offenders that are at the greatest risk of reoffending rather than offenders who willingly volunteer for treatment. Additionally, perpetrators of sex crimes recidivate less frequently after participating in pre-SOAR and SOAR (Sex Offender Accountability and Rehabilitation) programs than those who have not experienced the programs. Researchers observed a 34% reduction in the perpetration of non-violent crimes for previously-convicted sex offenders. The study found that older perpetrators present a reduced risk of recidivism. This agrees with the findings of Freeman (2012) and Langan, Schmitt, and Durose (2003). Researchers tracked a sample of 297 SOAR participants from 2009 to 2013 to determine whether offenders returned to prison after completing the program. Sex Offender Accountability and Rehabilitation program presents itself as a valuable tool for reducing recidivism.


Considering the effects of sex offender residence dispersion, spatial equity should be evaluated. The authors assert that current residence restriction policies are largely problematic because of their ability to push sex offenders into unregulated zones and out of cities entirely (also see Bagley, 2008). Also, according to the source, public perception is key in informing policy and sometimes drives legislation beyond the reach of empirical data. This aligns with the findings of
Mancini, C., Barnes, J. C., and Mears, D. P. (2013). The current study measures spatial equity in Hamilton County, Ohio by utilizing GIS, chi-square, and location quotients. Grubesic and Murray introduce spatial equity as a factor in residence restriction policymaking as it pertains to sex offenders.


In Hamilton County, Ohio, unrestricted zones are less socially disorganized than restricted areas. In contrast to Socia’s argument (2011), Grubesic, Murray, and Mack find that SRZs tend not to overlap and completely push sex offenders out. Researchers use five regression models to evaluate the differences between restricted and unrestricted zones in Hamilton County, Ohio. This study illustrates the variability of outcomes spatial restriction zones may have on sex offenders and communities at large.


Though the average sex offender is a white male of about 45 years of age, this research indicates that the registered sex offender population is more diverse and complex than widely promulgated statistics might indicate. It is important to standardize sex offender registries in order to acquire more reliable, germane data. The data suggests that some of the stigma faced by sex offenders is a result of ‘soundbite’ statistics, with little consideration given to Person-In-Environment Theory. Researchers surveyed agencies involved in monitor sex offender registries. Follow-up
calls and emails were then administered to clarify survey responses. The research sheds light on
the disparities throughout state sex offender registries


Hughes and Kadleck argue that community notification is harmful to disadvantaged communities
and that sex offender registries often contain outdated information. Like community restrictions
(according to Bagley, 2008), community notifications provide a false sense of security. Data was
collected by way of geographic analyses and the examination of relevant demographic
information. Researchers used the US Census Data and sex offender registries for Nebraska and
Oklahoma. This research adds to the conversation surrounding the utility of community
notification—a federally-mandated sex offense policy.

meta-analyses on the effects of sex offender treatment. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse, 17*(1), 105-
117. doi:10.1177/1524838014566719

All seven treatment methods yielded significant results except for insight-oriented, general
psychological, and therapeutic community interventions. Treatments are most effective for
adolescents and work best when conducted in communities rather than institutions. Chemical and
surgical treatments are more effective than psychological treatments but have the potential to
violate human rights. Though therapeutic treatments reportedly were less effective than physical
treatments, other research has indicated that the therapeutic is still beneficial in the reintegration
of sex offenders into society (Levenson, J. S., Prescott, D. S., & D'Amora, D. A., 2010). Kim,
Benekos, and Merlo analyzed seven sex offender treatment modalities using 11 meta-analyses. Researchers evaluate the effectiveness of various treatments in reducing recidivism.


Psychoeducation can significantly affect individuals’ views of sex offender treatment. The most effective delivery method is group-based psychoeducation, though computer modules also produce change. Mancini, Barnes and Mears found that policy has been constructed based on emotion and assumption rather than empirical evidence (2013). This study was divided into two parts which included an online portion and an in-person presentation. This exploratory study utilized random assignment to develop the sample groups. By integrating effective educational tactics, it is possible that policy and community attitudes will evolve to be more evidence-based.


This study outlines recidivism rates for sex offenders across 15 states. The study shows that sex offenders have a lower re-arrest rates than non-sex offenders. The document summarizes findings from a multi-year study. Recidivism is measured by rates of re-arrest, reconviction, and reimprisonment during a three-year period following the perpetrator’s initial release. Other types of offenders are more likely to reoffend and have fewer restrictions than sex offenders. As
asserted in other texts, the data found that a majority of sex offenders are non-Hispanic white males.

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Positive perceptions from therapists and other group members increases engagement in the therapeutic process. The study finds that sex offenders deem it necessary to understand the implications of the crime, accept responsibility, and receive acceptance into the group on the part of the therapist and other group members. This process is reminiscent of reintegrative shaming—a process within positive criminology (described by Elisha, E., Idisis, Y., & Ronel, N., 2012). A sample of 88 sex offenders receiving cognitive behavioral psychoeducation completed both a satisfaction and a group engagement survey. Levenson, Prescott, and D’Amora discuss important factors of sex offender rehabilitation.

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The government (at federal, state, and local levels) needs to take an evidence-based approach to sex offense policy. Presently, laws are inconsistent and widely lack efficacy. Researchers evaluate the “tough on crime” approach to sex offender policy. This text references policies that are discussed throughout other sources such as residence restrictions, community notification, and the sex offender registry; the researchers also introduce additional, lesser-known policies
like castration and drivers’ license restriction. The present study analyzes seven categories of sex offender policy including sex offender registries, community notification, residence restrictions, civil commitment, lifetime supervision, sex offender driver’s license notation requirements, and castration laws.


As a result of residence restrictions laws, the accuracy of sex offender registries can suffer. Additionally, data indicates that states with residence restriction policies are geographically clustered. The researcher suggests that advocates should seek to decrease media sensationalism and increase public awareness of sex offender realities. Willis, Levenson, and Ward (2010) also speak about the importance of shifting the media’s portrayal of sex offenders in order to foster humanization. Meloy, Miller, and Curtis conducted a content analysis of residence restriction policies in 30 states. Results from the analysis indicate that when residence restriction laws are universally applied to all sex offenders in an area, they are not only ineffective at reducing recidivism, they are detrimental to sex offender recovery.


M. Meloy, K. Curtis, and J. Boatwright find that lawmakers consider specific stories from victims of sex crimes and hope to provide these individuals with retributive justice through sex
offender policies. This work aligns well with information gathered by S. Katz Schivone and E. Jeglic (2008), as well as research conducted by A. Y. Agan (2011). Researchers compiled data from semi-structured interviews with at least one legislator from each state in the United States (a total of 61 respondents). Interviewers targeted representatives and senators who had sponsored a state-level sex offender bill. This research directly involves policymakers and provides verbatim accounts that shed light on the perceptions of sex offending.


Crime rates typically spike in late adolescence and early adulthood and dissipate after this stage; yet in certain cases, people continue to perpetrate throughout their lives. These individuals often present diminished verbal communication capacity (low verbal IQ) and a lack of impulsivity control. Much like Richards (2011), the researcher asserts that juvenile offenders vary greatly from their adult counterparts. Miller conducted a literature review of existing data on juvenile crime and justice. While youth offenders do present unique challenges, certain children possess resiliencies that equip them to transition into adulthood relatively unscathed. For example, greater verbal IQ, self-control, and the inclination to seek support and guidance from others all safeguard at-risk minors.

This document provides information on the adult requirements for the sex offender registry in the state of Wyoming; specifically, duration of registration, limitations on residency or employment, community notification and websites, information maintained in the registry, and registerable offenses. While RAINN provides information about all types of Sex Crimes punishable in the state of Wyoming, this NICCSA document focuses specifically on the sex offender registry as it pertains to Wyoming. The information for this text is provided by Wyoming Statutes. The source provides information on the registry that is specific to the state, making the data more relevant to the current research.


Households use and potentially misinterpret the data available on sex offender registries. This is indicated by the fluctuation of housing prices based on the relative proximity of a sex offender’s residence. Aligning with Meloy, Curtis, and Boatwright (2013) and Katz Schiavone and Jeglic (2008), the study finds that general public bases their beliefs upon specific stories and emotions. Pope uses two datasets in the analysis: details of single-family houses purchased in Hillsborough County, Florida between October 1996 and April 2006 and the Florida state sex offender registry. The data suggests that the public fears sex crime but is not necessarily well-educated about risk factors.

The text delineates different types of sexual crimes and how they are punishable in the state of Wyoming. It clarifies terminology used in other documents included in this compilation. RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network) uses state statutes and analyzes them, ultimately compiling them into documents for each respective state.


Juvenile (ages 10-17) sex offenders vary significantly from adult sex offenders in their offending patterns, risk factors, and barriers to rehabilitation. Findings that older sex offenders are less likely to be rearrested are consistent with the data collected by Richards. While adult offenders most commonly perpetrate in semi-public and private localities (see Colombino, Mercado, and Jeglic, 2009), juveniles tend to perpetrate in public areas. Richards compiled juvenile sex offense data on behalf of the Australian Institute of Criminology. Juveniles pose a more severe threat in terms of recidivism than adult offenders, as they are often more intensely scrutinized by the criminal justice system, face greater stigmatization, and risk substantial peer contagion.


Sex offenders released after the enactment of state residency restriction legislation move more than those paroled prior to implementation. Other findings on restriction zones question the efficacy of such policies at mitigating perpetration. Research uses a quasi-experimental cohort
design and evaluates patterns in sex offender movement before and after the implementation of residence restriction policies. Rydberg, Grommon, Huebner, and Bynum add mobility to the gamut of risk factors impacting sex offender recidivism.


Desistance for sex offenders is affected by job opportunities, housing availability and stability, and social support. In order to promote desistance, researchers recommend that experts engage more with the media (to demystify and humanize offenders), terminology for sexual offenders be altered, community restrictions laws be applied to only perpetrators with stranger victims, and communities invest in integration/reintegration efforts for sex offenders. Willis, Levenson, and Ward use a desistance framework to evaluate policies and practices. Desistance theories posit that sex offenders deserve to be treated like non-sex offenders after receiving disciplinary action. This research was conducted solely by reviewing existing literature on sex offenders, sex offense, sex offense legislation, and the public’s perception of sex offenders. Desistance theory provides the bibliography a useful framework with which to understand barriers to reintegration for sex offenders.

This report explained revisions made in 2007 to who is listed on the Sex Offender, spoke about the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (SORNA), and made note of the total number of registrants at the end of 2017. The Wyoming Sex Offender Registry listed a total number of 2291 perpetrators at the conclusion of the calendar year, which marks an increase from the previous year. The number of perpetrators listed in this text is markedly higher than the number given in the previous source. The information presented within the text has been collected using Wyoming state data, and makes reference to state policies. The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act (introduced to the researcher first here) becomes a common thread of reference throughout the literature contained in this bibliography.


Sex offenders are less likely to be re-arrested for either the same crime or a different crime than most other types of offenders. Sample and Bray express concern over the fiscal and manpower expenditures resulting from current sex offender policies akin to the sentiments of A. L. Bagley (2008). The re-arrest findings in this study are comparable to those of Langan, P. A., Schmitt, E. L., and Durose, M. R. (2003). Researchers utilized criminal histories maintained by the state of Illinois from 1990 to 1997.


Residence restriction laws are often passed as a response to political competition. Residence restrictions are not shown to reduce recidivism, yet they have the potential to deter prospective
offenders from committing the crime in the first place. The magnitude of sex offense in an area does not necessarily coincide with the severity and scope of residence restriction policies. This parallels the findings of Mancini, Barnes, & Mears, (2013). The researcher posed four research questions and completed a literature review to evaluate the subject area. Findings indicate that residence restrictions are not effective in increasing public safety.


Residence restriction policies do not produce positive outcomes for sex offenders or non-offender members of the community. Sex offense is not mitigated by current residence restriction policies. Akin to the argument made by Bagley (2008), Socia posits that these policies push sex offenders to areas that are less monitored and have fewer resources (which might include treatment centers and employment opportunities). These neighborhoods are usually more socially disorganized (lacking a capacity to self-regulate) which increases the likelihood of recidivism. The researcher completed a literature review that evaluated New York state policy. Subsequently, the researcher evaluated neighborhoods within 47 New York counties in order to compare their average characteristics. Socia introduces the concept of social disorganization as a factor involved in residence restriction-based sex offense policy.

Survivors of sex offenses tend to view their perpetrators more positively than non-victims. Survivors also have more reservations about sex offender registration and community notification requirements. Researchers find that sex offenders have the lowest reoffending rate out of all reoffenders, which is consistent with the findings of Langan, Schmitt, and Durose (2003). Additionally, 93% of survivors in the study were acquainted with or related to the perpetrator; this statistic mirrors data collected by Colombino, Mercado, and Jeglic in 2009. 1,173 undergraduate students participated in an online survey that measured perceptions and knowledge of sex offenders. This research provides data on survivors’ beliefs about sex offense.


Sex Offender Strategies (SOS) is a viable and effective treatment option for sex offenders with severe mental illness and/or intellectual/developmental disabilities, resulting decreased levels of aggression (sexual and otherwise) and greater compliance and engagement with the reintegration process. Unlike other treatment models, SOS caters specifically to people with significant cognitive differences. Researchers evaluate the effectiveness of Sex Offender Strategies as a treatment method for sex offenders within the target population. Stinson, Becker, and McVay collected data from sample size of 156 sex offenders located within an inpatient mental health facility. Data collected during treatment was then compared with participants’ baselines.

Sex offenders consistently move to more socially disorganized locations post-conviction. This finding parallels the research conducted by Socia in 2011. Researchers collected data on around 300 sex offenders including demographic information and residential characteristics. Researchers then evaluated the movement of sex offenders between census tracts. Because sex offenders never move to a more socially organized area after being convicted, perpetrators struggle to fully reintegrate into the larger society.


Sex offenders have likely experienced more childhood risk factors than other types of offenders; researchers observed more frequent instances of intrafamilial abuse and extrafamilial sexual abuse in the youth sex offender group than the non-sex offender group. Furthermore, sex offending individuals were more likely to engage in “sexually precocious behavior.” This research attends to many of the risk factors for youth offenders mentioned by Fortune (2018). Data gathered by Wanklyn, Ward, Cormier, Day, and Newman in this quantitative study examined childhood risk factors and their presence in incarcerated youth. The 2012 study included a total of 224 male youth incarcerated for both sex and non-sex offenses in Ontario, Canada.
This report explained revisions made in 2007 to who is listed on the Sex Offender, spoke about the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (SORNA), and made note of the total number of registrants at the end of 2017. The Wyoming Sex Offender Registry listed a total number of 2291 perpetrators at the conclusion of the calendar year, which marks an increase from the previous year. The number of perpetrators listed in this text is markedly higher than the number given in the previous source. The information presented within the text has been collected using Wyoming state data, and makes reference to state policies. The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act (introduced to the researcher first here) becomes a common thread of reference throughout the literature contained in this bibliography.

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Residence restriction laws are applied indiscriminately to sex offenders despite the heterogeneity of the population. The resulting ostracization leaves offenders with few opportunities to associate with non-offenders. Like Socia, 2011 and Bagley, 2008, this study calls into question the efficacy of residence restrictions. Zgoba, Levenson, and McKee collected data on Camden County, New Jersey that included the addresses of local churches, schools, and other centers and compared these with the residential locations of 211 registered sex offenders. Researchers note
that, in general, sex offenders do not seek residency nearer to school and daycares than non-offenders.