

Preliminary note: The paragraphs below concerning residence restrictions are excerpted from a position statement by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) entitled, “Community Management of Convicted Sex Offenders: Registration, Electronic Monitoring, Civil Commitment, Mandatory Minimums, and Residency Restrictions.”

For the full text of the position statement, please go to:

<http://www.naesv.org/Policypapers/communitymanagementofconvictedoffenders.html>

The following text is quoted from the position statement:

3. Residency Restrictions

A number of states and locales are considering residency restrictions in which sex offenders may not reside within a certain radius of schools, parks, skating rinks, certain neighborhoods, etc, and may not utilize resources such as group homes, homeless shelters and hurricane shelters. However, there is no evidence that these laws protect children. In fact, those states that have studied the issue carefully have found no relationship between sex offense recidivism and sex offenders' proximity to schools or other places where children congregate (see for example, Minnesota Department of Corrections, Level Three Sex Offenders Residential Placement Issues, 2003 Report to the Legislature; Colorado Department of Public Safety, Report on Safety Issues Raised by Living Arrangements for and Location of Sex Offenders in the Community, 2004).

Moreover, residency restrictions are having unintended consequences that decrease public safety. For example, Iowa Department of Public Safety statistics show that the number of sex offenders who are unaccounted for has doubled since a residency restriction law went into effect in June 2005 (Iowa Sex Offender Registry, data as of February 15, 2006). Sex offenders who continually move or become homeless as a result of residency restrictions are more difficult to supervise and monitor, thereby increasing the risk of re-offense. In addition, the establishment of sex offender residency laws is creating a domino effect, in that once a law is established in a community or state, the neighboring communities and states are considering similar laws so as to keep sex offenders from moving to their jurisdictions.

Research has shown that sex offenders with domestic stability (stable housing and social support) are less likely to commit new sex offenses compared to those offenders who lack such stability (Managing Sex Offenders in the Community: A National Overview, Lane Council of Governments, Eugene, Oregon, 2003). Because residency requirements cause instability, which may increase the risk of re-offense, NAESV opposes residency restrictions.