

Kansas Legislature considers registry changes

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[The Hutchinson News](#)

The state's offender registry began with efforts to track sex offenders. Over the past two decades, the registry has expanded to a wide range of crimes, including violent crimes and drug offenses. Kansas now adds more than 1,000 offenders a year to registries after they have completed other sentencing, all of which will likely remain on the registry for at least 15 years, the Kansas minimum for most offenders.

The state has one of the most broad registries in America, leading Kansas law enforcement to track over 20,000 offenders. All offenders, regardless of crime, must check in with law enforcement four times a year and pay \$20, more often if they make changes in job, create new social media accounts, get tattoos or make other changes.

Anecdotal stories of support for registries abound. Many Kansans undoubtedly like knowing if someone with a criminal

history has moved into their neighborhood. However, despite decades of use and billions of dollars in law enforcement spending, there is little evidence that registries actually prevent crime.

A University of Michigan analysis of decades of research on sex offender registries, for example, found “no reliable evidence that these laws work to reduce sex offender recidivism (despite years and years of effort), and some evidence (and plenty of expert sentiment) ... that these laws may increase sex offender recidivism” the author further explained, “to be deterred, potential offenders must have something to lose.”

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