

Current sexual offense registration and notification policies are nothing but “window-dressing”

written by admin | December 18, 2021



By [Meghan M. Mitchell, Kristen M. Zgoba, Alex R. Piquero](#) . . . There are roughly [half a million sexual assault incidents](#) in the United States every year – and more than [11,000 in Florida](#) alone. These numbers are troubling.

So it's no surprise that people search the [sex offender registration website](#) to make sure that no one convicted of a sexual offense lives near them or more worrisome, their children's school, day care or neighborhood park. The premise is simple: to make people feel safer in their community. But are they truly safer? Have we been relying on the wrong system? . . .

[D]o registration and notification policies actually deter individuals inclined to commit sexual offenses and protect citizens?

A new [study](#) of ours shows that these policies are not

effective in deterring crime or protecting citizens. We summarized 25 years of research and 474,640 formerly incarcerated sex offenders. We found that such policies do not reduce sexual or non-sexual recidivism.

If the policies are ineffective, then why do we have them?

These policies exist as a governmental response to community fear and outrage. There is political pressure to increase public safety. The problem is that these laws were enacted very quickly after child murder cases and became wide-reaching governmental mandates without research to back their existence and effectiveness. Fast forward 25 years, and the public and politicians are relying on window-dressing to feel safe.

[Read the full piece here at the Tampa Bay Times.](#)