

The danger to America's kids – not what you think

written by Sandy | May 24, 2023



By Sandy . . . Jacob Wetterling's abduction and death in **1989** led directly to a massive system of laws that today affects close to a million men, women, and children plus their family members.

In that same year, 1989, the death by firearms of [4,384](#) children and teens caused barely a blip on the radar.

Jacob was eleven when [he was abducted](#) on October 22, **1989**. Based on the account given by Jacob's brother and a childhood friend who witnessed the abduction, it was assumed from the outset to be sexually motivated and, when days of searching failed to find Jacob alive, assumed to be not just a kidnapping but a murder. This was not verified beyond question until 2016 when Jacob's remains were found.

Jacob's mother Patty Wetterling, in the aftermath of Jacob's loss, [began a journey](#) that would ultimately create the [Jacob](#)

[Wetterling Act](#). It was in May **1991** that legislation creating a registry of known child sexual offenders was first proposed, but the Jacob Wetterling Act, a United States law that requires** states to implement a registry of sex offenders and crimes against children, was not made law until September **1994**.

Extensive research has failed to show any other definitive cases of sexually motivated murder of children for many, many years* prior to 1989 or between 1989 and 1994. Had there been more, would the Jacob Wetterling Act have been made law sooner?

What if, instead of just Jacob, there had been ten such deaths? Fifty? A hundred?

What if there had been **4,384**? Or [5,793](#)?

Those are the numbers for **1989** and **1994**, respectively, of children and teens who were killed by firearms.

By the time that [Megan Kanka was murdered](#) in July **1994** at age seven, the system was ready, and it became known almost immediately that her killer had previous sexual offenses. [Megan's Law](#) – which requires** law enforcement authorities to make information available to the public regarding registered sex offenders – was enacted almost immediately, in 1994, and officially became a federal law a scant two years later, in **1996**.

Gun deaths of children and teens for those two years are [5,793](#) and [4,613](#) respectively.

The entirety of what created the [Adam Walsh Act](#) is a bit more convoluted. When he was six, [Adam was taken from a public setting](#) in **1981**, well prior to Jacob. Only his severed head was ever found. No one was ever charged or tried for the crime although a convicted killer who confessed was later declared the killer. A sexual motivation can only be surmised at best,

but that did not stop his father John Walsh, who had become a “tough-on-crime” television personality using his son’s name, from using that name and his own growing political influence until, in July **2006**, a federal statute named, in full, the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act was signed into law. It added to, increased, and formally structured penalties and punishments affecting those convicted of sexual crimes and attempted to standardize offender registries across all states.

[Gun deaths in 1981 of children and teens numbered 3,589.](#)

[In 2006 there were 3,184.](#)

And now, in **2023**, [Jesse McFadden](#), a registered sex offender in Oklahoma, has killed five children. Their murders were not sexually motivated, but that has not stopped every media and news outlet across the nation from linking the terms “sex offender” and “murdered children” as often as possible.

Nor has it stopped the rush to pile more restrictions and punishments on Oklahoma’s registered sex offenders. The family of the slain are, in their grief, asking for severe, even constitutionally questionable, penalties. At least one Oklahoma legislator plans to introduce “. . . new sex offender laws after a rapist killed six people,” [according to local media.](#)

The irony that cannot be overlooked is that the killer murdered his family, including children, with a gun.

Thus far in 2023, [707 children and youth ages 17 and under have been killed with firearms.](#) ***

We can only imagine what lawmakers would be proposing if, between January and May, 707 children under the age of 18 had been murdered by registered sexual offenders.

*In 1973 [nine-year-old Lisa Ann French](#) was taken, assaulted, and murdered by a neighbor. Extensive research indicates this was the first definitive death of a child publicly linked to a sexual crime.

**These federal laws do not actually “require” states to act in accordance with them in any given manner. States are “required” to establish a registry and to establish a means of providing information to the public, but the federal government has no control over the specifics of what each state’s registry looks like. The federal government attempts to gain state uniformity with the Adam Walsh Act, but their only means of enforcement is to withhold a certain amount of money from states not in compliance, which is, based on the most recent information, 33.

***This is a site that updates in live time. Today, May 24th, at the time of publishing, 707 children 17 and under have been killed by guns since January 1st. Yesterday the number was 680.