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REFORM SEX OFFENDER LAWS CREATES LEGAL FUND IN RESPONSE TO MURDERS OF GARY BLANTON AND JERRY RAY IN WASHINGTON STATE

Albuquerque, NM / June 18, 2012—Reform Sex Offender Laws (RSOL) As a result of the recent murders of Gary Blanton and Jerry Ray, RSOL has decided to create a legal fund dedicated to challenging the ever increasing restrictions imposed by legislatures throughout the United States. Any case RSOL undertakes must deal with registration itself and have broader implications for a significant number of similarly situated persons. With limited resources, RSOL cannot undertake any case where an individual simply wishes to challenge his/her conviction. RSOL's top priority is attacking the ever expanding reach of sex offender registries because it is clear that both Washington State's and Maine's internet websites have contributed to the death of several persons on those lists.

Clallam County prosecutor Deborah Kelly was quoted in recent a court hearing that Patrick Drum, the self-proclaimed vigilante had told investigators "he planned to keep killing sex offenders until he was stopped." According to Brenda Jones, Executive Director of RSOL, "there is scant evidence that sex offender registries enhance public safety, in fact, there is considerable evidence to the contrary. Public registration provides little more than a taxpayer-financed tool for vigilantes wishing to commit horrendous acts of vigilantism against registrants, and places their innocent children in danger." "Gary Blanton, one of those recently murdered in Washington State was clearly not a rapist. He was only 16 years of age himself when he engaged in consensual sexual contact with a 17-year-old girl he was dating," Jones said. The girl's parents filed charges, however, citing that she could not give legal consent due to a handicapping condition. Gary's death leaves his young wife Leslie alone to raise their sons Gary, Jr. and Skylar, both under the age of three. Jones said, "People on the registry are citizens too and the majority have completed serving their sentences. Their children such as Skylar and Gary Jr., are entitled to equal protection the same as any other citizen and they do not deserve to have their parents marked and identified as helpless targets for vigilantes."

Jones pointed out that this is that this is not the first incident where a person's name being listed on the public sex offender registry has led to his murder. In 2005, two men who were on the Washington State Sex Offender Registry were shot and killed in Bellingham by a vigilante who gained access to their home by posing as a law enforcement officer. Authorities investigating that shooting called it "one of the nation's most serious cases of vigilantism aimed at sex offenders." (Seattle Times, August 30, 2005)

Jones asks, "What has the state of Washington done during the intervening seven years to prevent this from happening again? RSOL is not aware of any action taken subsequent to the 2005 murders that would ameliorate the risk to registrants and their families. If they were concerned then, why was no action taken? And what will they do now that two more have been murdered at the hands of a vigilante using the sex offender registry as a tool?"

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR RATIONAL SEXUAL OFFENSE LAWS **Fighting to restore dignity & constitutional rights to millions.**

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RSOL believes that the ultimate solution is that access to home addresses of registrants should be available only to law enforcement rather than the general public. While this dramatic change in policy would require legislative action, RSOL again calls on Governor Gregoire to immediately issue an emergency order removing home addresses from the sex offender website. In addition, the Sex Offender Policy Board must commit itself to assuring the safety and well being not only of the men and women on its sex offender registry but also the family members of those registrants.

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