
Why The Policy Of Residence Restrictions On Pedophiles Is Completely Useless

Sex offences are crimes that are often reported in the media and tend to cause a large public outcry. In the United States of America, two thirds of sex offenders in prisons committed crimes against children. As defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (2013), pedophilia is the sexual involvement of an individual, who is at least 16 years of age, with a prepubescent child, 13 or younger. Some states in America, have implemented a policy prohibiting sex offenders from living within 1,000 feet away from schools or day care centers. Through analyzing case studies, this paper will argue as to why the policy of residence restrictions on pedophiles is one that is not effective.

One big issue that the policy of housing restrictions for convicted pedophiles arises is that it creates very limited housing options. There are cities in which there are many schools, and daycares, this results in many areas where the offenders cannot live. Not only this, but 37% of property managers said that they would refuse housing to sexual offenders. This creates a housing problem for them, and they end up being forced to cluster in high crime neighborhoods. This means they would end up in a community where many other felons live and a community where it is a common belief that the legal system is illegitimate and criminal behaviors are normative. They would have other felons as social supports, have very limited employment and treatment options. Proper social support, quality of life and having treatment options at their disposal is a crucial factor of keeping recidivism levels low.

The implementation of this policy causes the convicted felons to be trapped, with much lower chance of them being able to improve their quality of life and get treatment. The housing restriction policy can also cause problems where young adults cannot move back in with their families. Some families might live near schools and might not have the funds to be able to move somewhere else. This would render the younger offenders unable to live at close proximity from their families, and result in them lacking in social support that they could have had from their families. The risk of recidivism increases when there is isolation from family and friends. Levenson and Cotter (2005) conducted a study where they asked a pool of sex offenders from Florida to complete a survey about the impact of the policy of residence restriction imposed on sexual offenders. They found that a lot of the sex offenders themselves said "isolating me is not helpful" and they emphasized their need for social support. Therefore, the policy is not only ineffective but also could be the cause of a felon reoffending.

Restricting felons from living in certain areas is going end up being inconsequential if the offender is not getting treatment. Another offender from the Levenson and Cotter (2005) study mentioned above, stated that some exposure to children might even be of help to them. He said, "when I see kids in the park, I can see them as real people with real lives and real feelings, not just as an object". This line of thinking is similar to victim empathy training in therapy. When a policy is implemented where a previously convicted offender has to stay away from places where children live their lives, they are continuously being separated from seeing children as human beings and reintegrating with them. This could be a large factor in treating pedophiles and avoiding re-offense. Not only this, but many offenders said that they would not reoffend in close proximity to their homes and would travel to other neighborhoods where they

would not be recognized. This would leave a policy as such pointless. In conclusion, what is needed to avoid recidivism of sexual offenders is for them to have internal motivation to not reoffend. If a sex offender wanted to commit the felony again, such a rule would not stop them as children can be targeted anywhere, not just in schools. The policy not only causes felons to be isolated, it results in them not being able to get treatment.

Therefore, this policy is completely useless, and it might even cause triggers for re-offense where the felons are left in isolation. It seems as though the housing restriction policy is only beneficial for the victim that was targeted by a sex offender, in that they would not see the offender again.

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