



NO! NEWS

Alabama Coalition
Against Rape

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Alabama Toughens Sex Offender Laws

By KEN L. SPEAR

An 11-year-old called to witness stand sat terrified – so frightened that when her hands grasped the podium, it shook.

She had been raped by her grandfather since she was 9, and he was up for parole. With a trembling voice, the child pleaded, “I’m begging you to not let my granddaddy out of jail. I’m afraid of what he’ll do to me.”

That courtroom scenario haunted and troubled Alabama Attorney General Troy King. And even more disturbing: The state’s sex offender laws were worse than nothing. “They lulled citizens into a false sense of security,” he says.

Mr. King knew the grandfather’s sentence couldn’t be reversed, but he was well aware changes could be made to combat the problem in the future.

Along with a team of state lawmakers and law enforcement professionals, Mr. King embarked on strengthening the laws. That was in 2005.

Easier to Prosecute

Now considered as having penned one of the nation’s toughest legislation on sex offenders, state lawmakers successfully closed another chapter in this year’s session.

Among the pages, the newer laws:

- Shield child victims from having to testify in the same room with the offender. “This law is directly targeted at making it easier to prosecute,” the AG says. Thirty-two other states already allow this. “Yes the rights of the criminal matter,” the AG stresses, “but so are the rights of children.”
- Close the loophole in adult predators soliciting children online. A criminal is guilty of child solicitation, even if the “child” the criminal believes he’s picked up turns out to be an undercover officer.

“If you believe it’s a child you’re getting, you’re just as guilty and culpable,” Mr. King says.

Knowing Whereabouts

As a result, substantive changes are now on the books.

Those who commit sex offenses against children under age 12 would have mandatory minimum sentences of 20 years in prison if convicted of class A felonies, and 10 years in prison for class B and C felonies.

States Mr. King emphatically: “You serve every day of your sentence. No parole. No probation. If you prey upon a



child, you serve everyday of your sentence.”

The Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center in partnership with the Alabama Space and Rocket Center is currently in the process of bidding GPS technology.

This system of electronic monitoring is not only for sex offenders, but all other persons on probation, parole, or pre-trial release, with those monitored being responsible for its costs. “We’ll know where you are,” Mr. King says.

The offender would have to wear the electronic bracelet That will also be tied to a survivor’s cell phone, for example. A text message would alert the survivor if the offender is near. It doesn’t keep them away,” Mr. King explains, “but it gives you the ability to not be surprised.”

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Reporting time periods are now tightened. Sex offenders are required to report to local law enforcement after their release from prison or change of residence within seven days instead of the 30 previously allowed.

They would have to declare their intended place of residence 45 days before their release from prison, instead of 30.

Sex offenders would be required to possess either a driver’s license or identification card that would be marked SEX OFFENDER by the Department of Public Safety to identify them.

Overall, all penalties in the Community Notification Act would become class C felonies.

From the Editor's Desk ...

RAPE: A 4-Letter Word With a Bigger Meaning

By Ken L. Spear

Rape — a four-letter word that most people seem too shy to utter — is a multi-faceted crime that should raise the ire of society in general.

This month's issue of NO! News is keenly focusing on sex offenders. — a topic that is garnering heavy political, social and media attention.

Working in the field, it has become crystallized that it will take more than legislation and jail time.

This is as much a public health problem as it is a crime.

The dimensions of rape are vast,

and the occurrence of sexual assault is more common than any other crime.

Here's the problem, however, many victims suffer in silence.

That is what the offender wants. So they find avenues to prey on innocent children, people with disabilities and the elderly.

Until they are caught.

Let's start with the Internet. Predators, including convicted sex offenders, surf the Web to entice children and teenagers.

Once a child is lured, that becomes an issue of statutory rape.

Here at the Alabama Coalition Against Rape, we're also discovering that with the population boom of senior citizens, the elderly — particularly women — are becoming targets.

Many times, they are violated by caregivers and others they know.

A similar grim picture can be painted for people with physical handicaps and those who are mentally incapacitated.

Recent reports state that sex offenders are getting younger and more violent.

It's time for real intervention and prevention. This is why we're here. Help us.

ACAR's services include:

- Training for allied professionals through workshops and conferences
- Education of the public about sexual assault through prevention programs, website, quarterly newsletter and other materials
- Advocacy for sexual assault survivors with statewide agencies and in the formation of public policy
- Support for sexual assault program staff through training, technical assistance, and our resource library of books, videos and training materials
- Networking with other statewide agencies that address issues of violence against women
- Providing information, technical assistance, and resources to anyone seeking to learn more about the prevalence and prevention of sexual violence.

So what if there's a backlog, shortage of manpower?

Looking Beyond State Registry for Sex Offenders

By Ken L. Spear

In Alabama, 8,274 sex offenders are on the state registry and enterprising journalists in many counties are discovering that many more are not on the list.

Here in the Capital City, for instance, 373 are listed on the Sex Offender Watch list on the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department Web page.

But, only 203 are listed on the state Department of Public Safety's registry. So what?

A deluge of media attention tends to tap into people's worst fears. Periodically phobias arise when it is reported that a convicted violent sex criminal is released or a high volume or a high volume of sex offenders aren't registering.

Typically stringent laws and a cacophony of "stranger danger" lessons follow. Although people feel safe, experts say they may have little effect.

Most cases of sexual abuse and

predation are people the victims know. The National Center for Victims of Crime reports that 90 percent of child sexual abusers are male and have been married. They are often family members, family friends or acquaintances of those they abuse.

These statistics point to an urgent need for a movement that should involve well-meaning men. With proper intervention and prevention, it is proven that men can stop rape.

90 percent of child sexual abusers are male and have been married. They are often family members, family friends or acquaintances of those they abuse.

—
National Center for Victims of Crime

Panel Will Issue Report Next Year

Baptists Eye Sex Offender Database

Peter Smith/
© The Courier-Journal

SAN ANTONIO — The Southern Baptist Convention took a step that could lead to the creation of a database of pastors who have committed sexual misconduct.

The convention overwhelmingly voted without debate to ask its Executive Committee to study the feasibility of creating such a database.

The committee is required to report back to next year's convention. The database would include names of those "credibly accused of, personally confessed to, or legally been convicted of sexual harassment or abuse," according to the motion approved by the convention on the first day of its two-day meeting.

The aim would be to prevent a minister who offends in one church from finding a job in

another where the minister's history is unknown.

"I'm not smart enough to establish what should be done, but I'm asking them to investigate," Enid, Okla., pastor Wade Burleson, sponsor of the measure, said after the vote.

Christa Brown, an advocate for victims, called the vote "very positive." Brown is the Baptist coordinator of the Survivors Network of those Abused by

Priests, an advocacy group that played a major role in exposing the extent of sexual abuse among Roman Catholic clergy.

Brown said such a database is needed, saying she was abused as a child in a Southern Baptist church, that another minister knew of it — and that it took her extensive work to discover the man she said abused her was still ministering to children in another state.



Why won't feminists protest misogyny in hip-hop culture?

By ANTHONY BRADLEY

In April, misogynist rapper Akon was filmed in Trinidad simulating sex on stage at a concert with a teenage girl.

Danah Alleyne, a pastor's daughter, was led on stage to participate in a dance contest but soon discovered that Akon had other plans. Verizon has now dumped Akon from their agreement but the question remains: Why hasn't the Universal Music Group taken action?

The Universal Music Group, instead of firing Akon, attacked YouTube.com for showing the footage.

Radio pundit Don Imus was publicly tarred and feathered for stupidly referring to the Rutgers basketball team as "nappy-headed hos." He lost both his television and radio platforms. Akon, however, who recently appeared on "American Idol," has heard crickets for weeks.

The silence signals the failure of feminism, the church, rap artists, American men, and the music industry.

The National Organization for Women does not list misogynistic music as a priority on its Web site.

“American men have been incredibly shameless ... Why aren't men doing everything we can to see that Women have the best lives possible?”

Why not? Misogynistic hip-hop is the most popular form of the genre played on cable television and radio stations around the world. Feminists continue to fail women by remaining silent.

Religious leaders have also dropped the ball. While a few courageous pastors have condemned the putrid music, many religious leaders are too busy building their fame, or trying to save frogs, to pay attention to the misogyny that is destroying our communities. The National Council of Churches is turning a blind eye to the disrespecting of women.

Rap artists, male and female alike, are so drunk on their own narcissism that "poetic expressions" of virtue are not a priority. Animalizing women and perverting human sexuality

to sell CDs is not "artistic expression."

Hip-hop exists to bless our world, not facilitate its denigration.

American men have been incredibly shameless. What kind of country do we live in where men create market demand for artists like Akon? Why aren't men protesting Akon?

Women are our mothers, sisters, daughters and aunts. They are vital to the future of our society. Why aren't men doing everything we can to see that women have the best lives possible?

Finally, the music industry continues to demonstrate pathetic cowardice. It pitifully has no ability to regulate itself.

Even if there is a market demand for filth, record labels should risk doing what is morally right instead of profiting from the perversion of femininity.

The music industry has forgotten that the purpose of economic activity is to serve the common good of society through the production of useful goods and services.



Verizon is to be commended for dropping Akon and should contact the Universal Music Group to offer a free lesson in integrity. This kind of moral leadership in business is what is needed if misogyny is ever going to die.

May Verizon's courageous first step be one of many as we all take seriously our role in fighting for the inherent dignity of women, sending a message that America is a place where women are to be treated with respect and honor.



Anthony Bradley, an assistant professor of apologetics and systematic theology at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, is

a research fellow at the Acton Institute.

State offender list out of date

State backlog creates raft of inconsistencies in local, state data

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**STAN DIEL/
© Birmingham News**

Much of the information on Alabama's online state registry of convicted sex offenders is obsolete because of a months-long backlog of records.

States have been required by federal law since 1994 to maintain listings of sex offenders.

Officials with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, which tracks sex offenders in the county, said they send information on offenders' whereabouts to the state once a week to be posted on Alabama's online registry. But months sometimes pass before the state gets the information on the Web site.

"The state is six months behind," said Sgt. Randy Christian, spokesman for the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department. Because of the backlog at the state Department of Public Safety, there is a raft of inconsistencies between the state and local lists, both of which are available to the public via the Internet. The backlog also means that Alabama information posted on the nation's most popular privately run sex-offender tracking Web site can be obsolete, because that site relies on official state registries for its data.

Among the inconsistencies between the state and local lists: 556 sex offenders appear on both the state and county lists for Jefferson County, but 135 more appear only on the list maintained by the county and 120 appear only on the list maintained by the state.

36 sex offenders who are listed on the state list as living in

homes or apartments in Jefferson County are actually in state prison or the county jail, according to the county list.

96 Jefferson County sex offenders, or 12 percent of the county's total, are on both the state and county lists, but are listed at different home addresses on each.

Officials with the state Department of Public Safety, which has four full-time employees dedicated to maintaining the state's registry Web site, said the delay in posting information ranges from days to months, depending on the nature of the information.

"Prevention and education should be given more emphasis."

— Greg Weaver, director of Auburn University's Criminology and Criminal Justice program.

Information provided by law enforcement agencies in other states, for example, takes the longest to get on the site because it must be vetted by department lawyers. Also contributing to the delay is a lack of resources and a steady increase in the number of registered sex offenders in the state, said Renita Ward, an analyst with the department. "We have more and more offenders every day," she said.

The state receives all of its information on sex offenders on paper and must manually enter the data. Typographical errors in names and addresses are common. Ward said a planned technology upgrade should alleviate the backlog. In the meantime, she recommended that concerned parents and others turn first to their county sheriff's department's Web site instead of

the state's site to identify sex offenders in their neighborhoods. "We recommend that they check with their local law enforcement first," she said. "They're on the front line."

There are 8,274 registered sex offenders in the state, according to the most recent Department of Public Safety data. According to state and local data, 811 sex offenders live in Jefferson County and 94 live in Shelby County.

Each offender is required to report to the county sheriff his home and work address twice a year, and before moving, said the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department's Christian.

Offenders are barred by state law from living or working within 2,000 feet of a school. When they move to a new location, they must notify neighbors within 1,000 feet of their homes.

The Web sites operated by most states and many local governments have become increasingly popular. Many, including sites operated by the Shelby and Jefferson County sheriff's departments, allow users to sign up for e-mail alerts when a registered sex offender moves near their home.

Greg Weaver, director of the Criminology and Criminal Justice program at Auburn University, said the registries are important resources, but shouldn't be viewed as the sole solution to the problem of sex crimes.

"Prevention and education should be given more emphasis," he said.

Parents should be aware, for example, that studies indicate as many as 80 percent of child victims know their assailants.

As states have moved to put their registries on the Internet,



the federal government and private companies have compiled them into national databases. One popular, privately run national site, www.familywatchdog.us, creates maps complete with icons marking the homes and workplaces of registered offenders, and their proximity to schools. Managers at the Indiana company said the site gets more than 3 million visitors a month.

Steve Roddel, Watchdog president, CEO and founder, said he created the site after a search of a local offender registry in suburban Indianapolis failed to identify a registered sex offender living 600 feet from his home.

"He was literally three doors down," he said.

Because Watchdog includes data from every state, a search of it sometimes finds offenders that a user of a local site might miss. A Watchdog search finds offenders living just across state or county lines, while others may not, he said. The site updates its data at least once a day and gets fresh data from states several times daily.

"We're never more than 24 hours behind," he said. Still, Roddel said, Watchdog gets its Alabama data exclusively from the official state registry, which administrators say is limited by its backlog of data.

What can be done to stop predators?

'Some can be easily treated, some can't... and you've got the whole group in between,' says Fred Berlin, a professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University

**By Chris Hansen/
© Dateline**

Editor's Note: This article contains excerpts from a transcript based on an interview between Mr. Hansen and Dr. Fred Berlin, a psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Dr. Berlin has more than 25 years of experience working with sexual offenders. Hansen asks Dr. Berlin whether or not pedophilia can be solved with more severe punishment and better legislation. Can these men even be successfully rehabilitated?

Dr. Fred Berlin: One point I do want to make, though, is that we're not, in my judgment, going to solve the problem only through a criminal justice approach. I very much support that, let me make it clear. But think about it for a moment, if the only thing we do with a person who's having sexual cravings about children is to send them to prison, there's nothing about prison alone that will either erase those cravings or enhance their capacity to successfully resist acting upon them.

Sooner or later, like it or not, most of these men are going to be back out there in the com-

munity. So unless we have both a strong criminal justice component and a strong public health component, in my judgment, we are doing society a tremendous disservice.

Chris Hansen, Dateline correspondent: The natural reaction after seeing a story like this is to say, "Lock these guys up. Throw away the key. That's the only way to protect children."

Dr. Berlin: Well-- I think before I got into this area, I might have had quite the same reaction. One of the things we've done in this area is we've completely dehumanized these people. If we look back historically, at one time we looked at alcoholism as though it was only a moral problem. The alcoholic was the bum in the gutter.

Well, we still have moral values as we should when it comes to alcoholism. But we also have the Betty Ford Clinic. We recognize there are legitimate concerns for science and medicine.

When we talk about terms like "sexual predator," "pedophile," "sexual offender," we're talking as though it's only a moral problem. And God knows

they're important moral issues. But there are also important issues of medical and scientific concern. How is it that some

people are not attracted to people of their own age? How is it that some people crave sex with children and they're not attracted to other adults? Given the fact that such people exist and that we can't punish away or legislate those kinds of disorders, what can we learn through science research to help make society safer? What kinds of treatments can we provide for them?

Hansen: Is this a problem that can be solved with more severe punishment and better legislation?

Dr. Berlin: The sense that I get is that our society today seems to feel that almost every problem can be solved by enforcing some prior statute more sternly, or by enacting new legislation. There are other things that have to be looked at. There's the role of science. There's the role of research. There's the role of treatment. There's the role of treatment providers working collaboratively with parole and



probation in situations such as this. There are laws being enacted now in terms of where people who are sexual offenders can live in some states. Whereas other states are beginning to wonder if those laws are helping and are looking towards rescinding them. Because there's so much emotion tied to this, we really need to get beyond that emotion, to think it through and to try to base public policy on facts that are going to try to lead to effective solutions. And if I may just add one final point to that: Much of public policy today in this area is based on the exception rather than the rule—those horrible cases where there's a kidnapping, a sexual assault and a murder of a young child. That is a fraction of one percent of the big problem. And yet if we're going to base our public policy on the exception rather than the rule, it begs the question as to whether or not that's going to be the most effective public policy.

Please see PREDATOR, P6

PREDATOR, Continued from P5

Hansen: You're not suggesting that these men shouldn't be arrested or put in prison.

Dr. Berlin: Absolutely not. We need a very strong criminal justice approach when it comes to this area. But in addition, not instead but in addition, we also need to have a strong public health approach. If the only thing we do with men who are having sexual cravings for children is put them in prison and do nothing more, prison won't erase those cravings or help them more successfully resist acting on them.

It really does amaze me, to be candid about it, that in our society we treat the person who's stolen from somebody, who's cheated on his taxes, and who's sexually desirous of children in exactly the same way, as though we can just punish them all, teach them a lesson and everything's going to be fine. If only the world were that simple.

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Read More 'Can Predators Be Stopped?' On the Web:

www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11164933/



“ ... Unless we have both a strong criminal justice component and a strong public health component, we are doing society a tremendous disservice.”

Sex Offenders Younger, More Violent, Study Says

STOCKTON, California (AP) -- Courts have seen the number of sex offense cases involving juvenile offenders rise dramatically in recent years, an Associated Press review of national statistics found, and treatment professionals say the offenders are getting younger and the crimes more violent.

Some psychologists blame the increase in numbers -- 40 percent over two decades -- on a society saturated with sex and violence and the fact that many of the accused were themselves victims of adult sexual predators.

Others say there aren't more children committing such crimes, simply more awareness, better reporting and a general hysteria about sex offenders.

"I don't think it's appropriate to suggest we have whole schools full of sexual predators ... but we're seeing more of it and more sexually aggressive acts," said Scott Poland, past president of the National Association of School Psychologists. "How do these kids even know about this? It's permeated throughout our society."

Robert Prentky, a psychologist and nationally renowned expert on sex offenders in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, thinks the statistics are misleading. "There aren't more kids, there are more laws," he said. "We now have fairly draconian laws with very harsh sanctions that apply to juveniles."

The number of children under 18 accused of forcible rape, violent and nonviolent sex offenses rose from 24,100 in 1985 to 33,800 in 2004, the AP's analysis found. Violent offenses include attempted rape and sexual assault, while nonviolent offenses including fondling, statutory rape and prostitution.

By comparison, rape and sexual assaults by adults decreased more

than 56 percent from 1993 to 2004. Comparable statistics were unavailable before 1993. The AP analyzed state and federal crime statistics, as well as independent research on juvenile sex offenders. Sources included the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Center for Juvenile Justice, a Pennsylvania-based nonprofit that specializes in statistical and policy research; and The Safer Society Foundation Inc., a Vermont nonprofit that works to prevent sexual abuse.

“The whole society is not yet up on this problem. ... If nothing is done to catch them, they're going to become our adult offenders of tomorrow.”

Sharon Araj, an Alaska psychologist who took one of the first broad looks at the problem in her book "Sexually Aggressive Children," thinks the number of child-on-child sex crimes is actually even higher than the statistics indicate.

Only 28 percent of all violent sexual assaults are reported to police, according to a 1999 National Crime Victimization Survey. And cases of incest between siblings are widely thought to be underreported and may drive the numbers even higher, Araj says.

"The whole society is not yet up on this problem," Araj said. "These kids, on the extreme end, if nothing is done to catch them, they're going to become our adult offenders of tomorrow."

Many -- estimates range from 40 percent to 80 percent -- were molested themselves. And 42 percent have been exposed to hardcore pornography, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, an arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, said in a 2001 report. Psychologists prefer to refer to juveniles charged with sex crimes as "sexually aggressive children," rather than as sex offenders.

Psychologist Heather Bowlds, who runs a sex offender treatment program within California's Department of Juvenile Justice, says sexually aggressive children often have a skewed sense of sexuality in which force or violence becomes normal.

"Some kids see it as how you show affection, how you get your needs met," she said. "If you're a kid watching your father rape your mother ... if I feel like I want it, I can get it, no matter what."

Alabama Coalition Against Rape

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Dues Schedule

Full Member - \$100

Donations to ACAR are tax-deductible.

(or 1/2 of 1% of sexual assault agency or program budget)

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Please return to:

ACAR

P.O. Box 4091

Montgomery, AL 36102

(334) 264-0123 phone



Alabama Coalition Against Rape

320 N. Hull St.
P.O. Box 4091
Montgomery, AL 36102

Phone: 334-264-0123
Fax: 334-264-0128
E-mail: kspear@acar.org



On the Web:
www.acar.org

What is ACAR?

The Alabama Coalition Against Rape (ACAR) was founded in 1995. Comprised of 15 member rape crisis centers, ACAR conducts prevention activities and empowers centers to facilitate the humane, consistent and compassionate care of victims of sexual violence and their families.

These are accomplished through community awareness, standardizations of members services, education, research and advocacy activities. ACAR endeavors to continually improve the treatment of sexual violence survivors and to ultimately end sexual violence.

Rape Crisis Centers & the Counties Served

Standing Together Against Rape (STAR)

Crisis Line: (334) 213-1227
Office (334) 213-1227

Autauga, Butler, Crenshaw, Elmore, Lowndes, Montgomery

Crisis Center Inc., Rape Response

Crisis Line: (205) 323-7273,
(888) 323-7273

Office: (205) 323-7782

Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, Walker

Daybreak Crisis Recovery Center

Crisis Line: (256) 231-0654

Office: (256) 237-6300

Calhoun, Cherokee, Cleburne, Dekalb, Etowah, Talladega, Randolph

Crisis Center of North Alabama

Crisis Line: (256) 716-1000,
(800) 691-8426

Office: (256) 716-4052
Jackson, Limestone, Madison

SafeHouse

Crisis Line: (205) 664-4357,
Office: (205) 664-5930

Clay, Coosa, Shelby

House of Ruth, Inc.

Crisis Line: (334) 793-2232 Of-
fice: (334) 793-5214

Barbour, Bullock, Coffee, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Pike

Mental Health Association in Morgan County

Crisis Line:
(256) 353-1160, Office: (256)
353-1160

Lawrence, Morgan

Rape Counselors of East Alabama

Crisis Line: (334) 745-8634,
Office: (334) 741-0707

Chambers, Lee, Macon, Tallapoosa

Lifelines Family Counseling Center

Crisis Line: (334) 473-7273,
(800) 718-7274; Office: (334)
431-5100

Clarke, Mobile, Washington

Shoals Crisis Center — Rape Response

Crisis Line: (256) 767-1100
Office: (256) 765-0025

Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion

Turning Point

Crisis Line: (205) 758-0808,
Office: (205) 758-0808

Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Marengo, Pickens, Sumter, Tuscaloosa

Victim Services of Cullman, Inc.

Crisis Line: (256) 734-6120 /
734-6100

Office: (256) 775-2600

Cullman, Marshall, Winston

Lighthouse-Baldwin Co.

Crisis Line: (251) 947-4393
Office: (252) 947-6196

Baldwin, Escambia

Crisis Center of Russell County

Crisis Line: (334) 297-4401,
Office: (334) 297-4484

Russell

Sabra Sanctuary, Inc. Crisis Line: (334) 874-8711, Office: (334) 877-4645

Dallas, Perry, Wilcox

ACAR

National Sexual Assault Hot-
line **1-800-656-HOPE** (4673)