

**Discussant Comments**  
**“Sex Offender Registration, Notification, Housing and Reentry”**  
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**Political Expedience Seldom Makes Good Public Policy**

- Sex offender registration and exclusion laws are designed to make the public feel safer; however, they may be ineffective.
- Excluding sex offenders from living in certain areas may be ineffective since offenders can drive to these areas.
- Colored license plates may be ineffective because offenders may share a vehicle with other household members.
- Policies that are politically expedient, but potentially ineffective, are creating a group of second-class citizens rather than improving public safety.

**Juvenile Sex Offenders Present a Unique Problem for Juvenile Offenders**

- Exclusion laws also apply to juveniles and currently 32 states require juveniles to register as sex offenders with local law enforcement.
  - Sex offender laws treat juveniles the same as adults with respect to reporting, notification, and length of classification although juveniles have fewer legal rights and protections than adults.
- Many juvenile offenders are labeled as sex offenders without regard for age, type of offense, or consent (e.g., statutory rape).
- Since most jurisdictions do not distinguish between adult and juvenile registrants, many juveniles will have to register for life, making it difficult to lead a productive and stigma-free life.
- Juvenile offenders are not exempt from community notification which compromises the confidentiality of juvenile court records.
- What legally constitutes sexual misconduct for juveniles may be the same for adults. However empirical studies indicate that:
  1. Although the behaviors are similar, the underlying mechanisms triggering the behaviors are different.
  2. Recidivism rate for juvenile sex offenders range from 8%-12%, while recidivism rates for adults range from 20%-40%.
  3. Deviant behavior is less established in juveniles because they are still developing.

**Registration and Notification Requirements are Inconsistent with Juvenile Justice Concepts such as Treatment and Rehabilitation**

- They subject juveniles to social ostracism.
- They limit access to education and employment opportunities.
- They make it difficult for locating a place to live for the juveniles' families, particularly when other children are residing in the home.
- They limit residential treatment options because many facilities will not accept sex offenders.