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Gillmor Targets Sex Offenders

Ohio Congressman proposes sex offender task force

WASHINGTON, DC- After the U.S. House passed his bill to create a national sex offender database, Congressman Paul E. Gillmor (R- Old Fort) has introduced a new bill to create national sex offender classifications. Gillmor's bill, the Safe NOW Act of 2006, would establish a National Sex Offender Risk Classification Task Force to create guidelines for a risk-based sex offender classification system. Sex offenders would be classified based on the threat of danger they pose to the public and that classification would allow law enforcement agencies to identify the most dangerous offenders. Today, sex offenders are classified on a state-by-state basis. However, classifications widely differ across state lines and can cause confusion among law enforcement in differing jurisdictions.

"When dealing with sex offenders in America, there are few laws which have the teeth to truly affect this epidemic. By classifying sex offenders according to federal standards, our law enforcement agencies will have a uniform way of evaluating the risk of each offender," Gillmor said.

According to Gillmor's bill, a National Task Force, comprised of 20 members appointed by the U.S. Attorney General, will work in five groups to create guidelines to classify sex offenders. Among their duties, the Task Force will: identify the strengths and weaknesses in current Federal, State, and local sex offender laws; serve as a resource for educating the public about the dangers of sex offenders and ways to prevent sex crimes; and analyze the effectiveness of current programs across America. The Task Force will present a report to Congress and the U.S. Attorney General one year after passage of the Gillmor bill.

In announcing her support of Gillmor's bill, Margaret Bullens, Founder of the Safe NOW Project said:

"This study represents a milestone in the evolution of public policy designed to understand the range of risks and dangers posed by registered sex offenders. The Safe NOW Project applauds Congressman Paul Gillmor and the other members of Congress who recognize the need and importance of this significant piece of legislation."

"All across America, our communities have been reeling from the pain caused by sexual predators. This legislation is designed to help empower law enforcement officers with the guidelines and knowledge necessary to further protect citizens from sex offenders. With more than one in three sex offenders in Ohio returning to jail within 10 years, increased awareness about sex offenders is a matter of necessity," Gillmor said. "By classifying sex offenders according to uniform standards, we can ensure that those who pose the most risk are treated differently than other offenders," Gillmor concluded.

Sex Offender Figures from the reports by the U.S. Department of Justice:

- Released sex offenders were 4 times more likely to be rearrested for a sex crime.

- On average, the child molesters in the DOJ's 2003 study served 43 percent of the jail time for which they were incarcerated.
- Research using information generated through polygraph examinations on imprisoned sex offenders with fewer than two known victims found that these offenders actually had an average of 110 victims and 318 offenses.
- Another study by the Department of Justice shows an average of 16 years of committing sex crimes before being caught.

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