



WASHINGTON SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE 2017

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ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

SOCIAL WORK AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

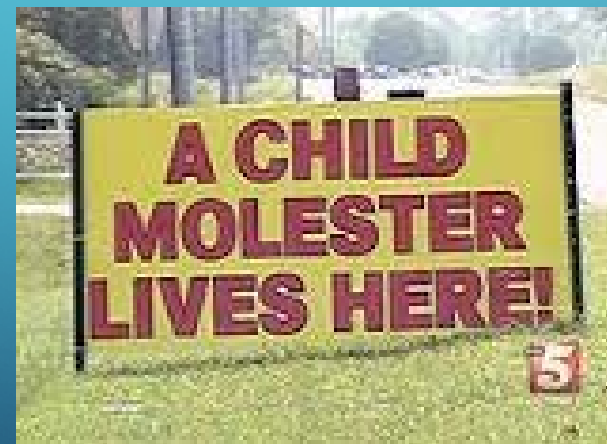
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, TACOMA

BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

- Research
 - Sex Offender Management Policy
 - Sexual Violence Prevention
 - Effects of Sexual Victimization



JUSTIFICATION?



PUBLIC CLAIMS

- “100,000 missing sex offenders”
- Residence restrictions will stop offenders from finding children to prey on
- Community notification provides information to the public to keep people safe from sex offenders
- SORN policies keep people safe by controlling and monitoring dangerous people

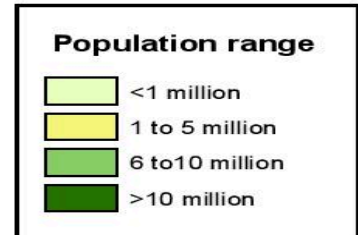
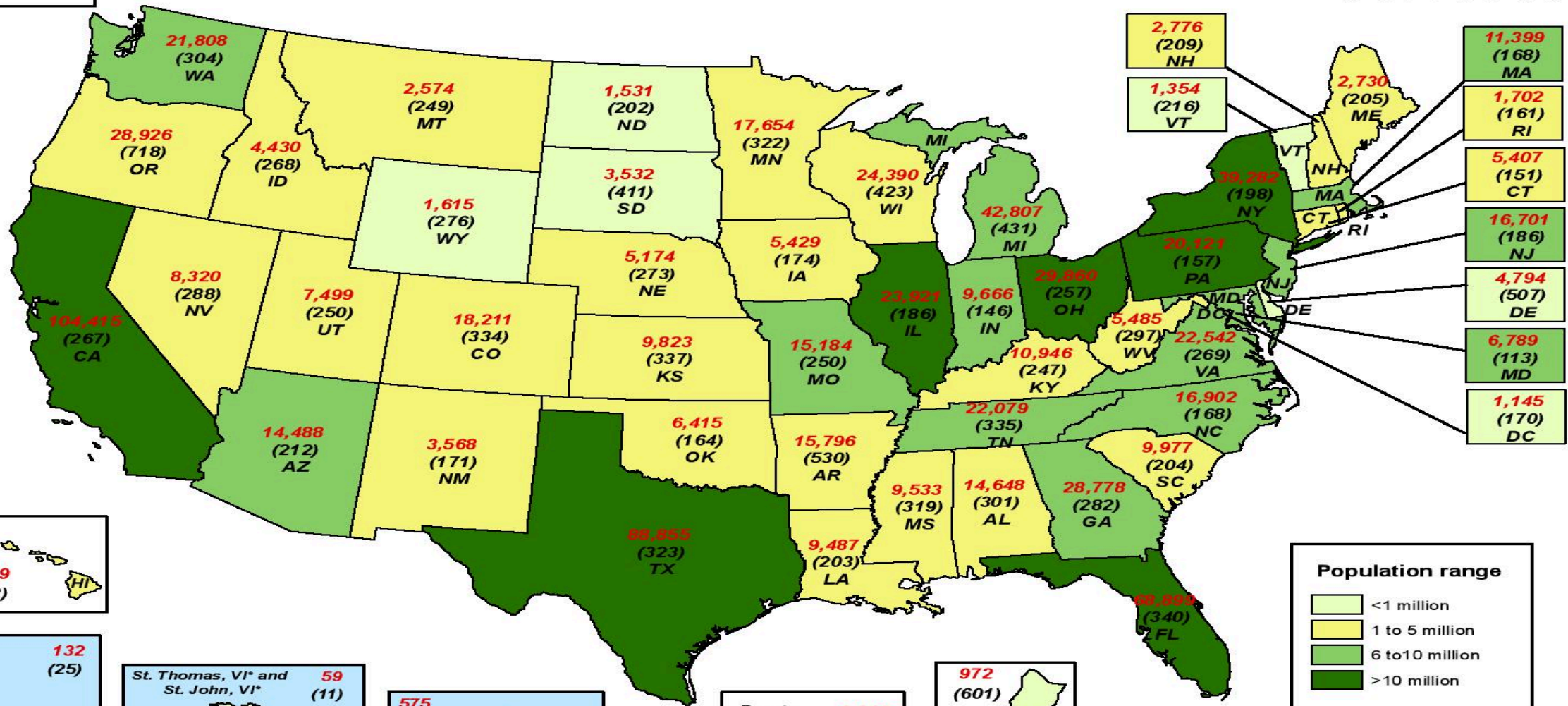
CONTENT AND MAKEUP OF REGISTRIES

- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
 - Source of data cited by media and policymakers
 - An independent non-profit
 - Prominent role in promoting expanded federal responsibility



Registered sex offenders in the United States and its territories per 100,000 population

Total - 859,500 (per 100,000 population - 264)



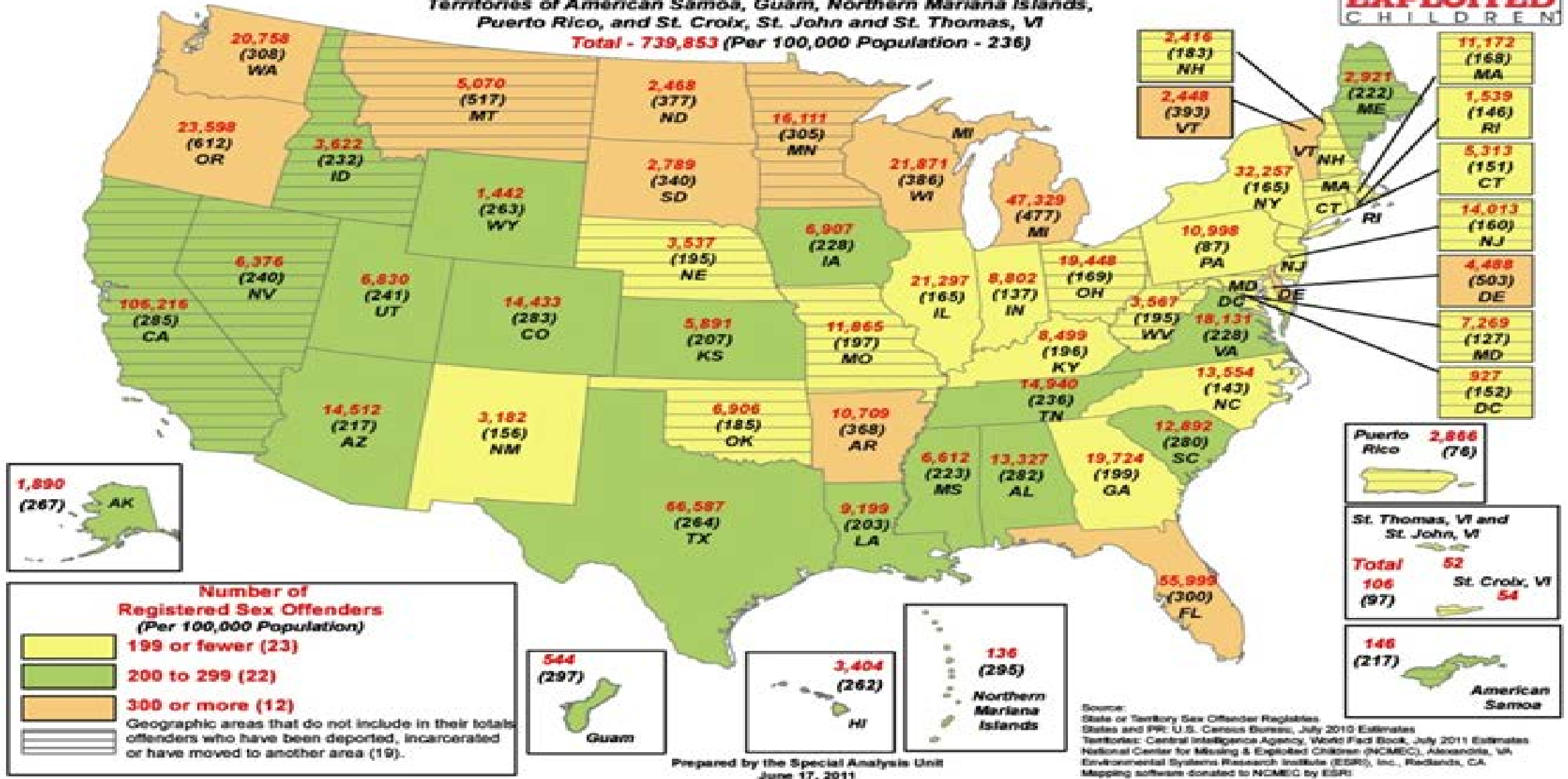
Prepared by the Records and Access Unit, December 6, 2016
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)
RSO data: State or territory sex offender registries
Population range: 2015 U.S. Census Bureau or
*2010 U.S. Census Bureau

Mapping software donated to NCMEC by Esri, Redlands, California

Territories with population rates per 10,000 (American Samoa, N. Mariana and Virgin Islands)

REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS IN THE UNITED STATES PER 100,000 POPULATION

Including the District of Columbia and
Territories of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands,
Puerto Rico, and St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas, VI
Total - 739,853 (Per 100,000 Population - 236)



MAKEUP OF SEX OFFENDER REGISTRIES

Ackerman, Harris, Levenson & Zgoba (2011)

(N=445,127) 66% of NCMEC Total

88% in the community

47,978 incarcerated

3,251 deported; 1,028 deceased

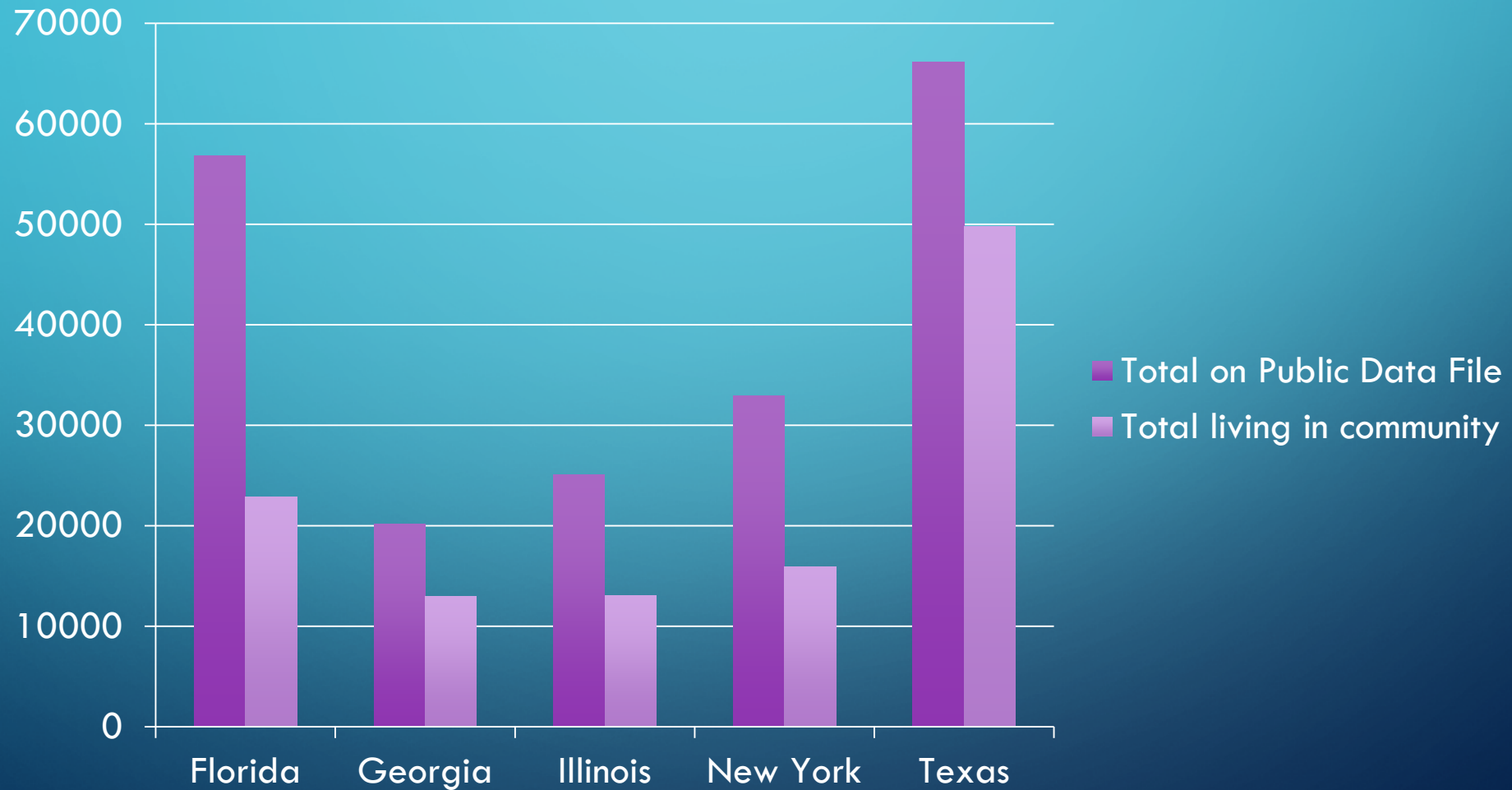
6,972 homeless; 5,349 absconded; 4,152 in violation;
1,264 whereabouts unknown

ADJUSTED COUNTS AND RATES

	Florida	Georgia	Illinois	New York	Texas
Total NCMEC	55,999	19,724	21,297	32,257	66,587
Total Public Data	56,784	20,212	25,088	32,930	66,121
Total in Community	22,877	13,011	13,066	15,950	49,786
% Difference	-60%	-36%	-48%	-52%	-25%
NCMEC Rate	300	199	165	165	264
Adjusted Rate	132	134	101	70	212

Ackerman, Levenson & Harris (2012)

COMPARISON OF REGISTRY TOTALS



Ackerman, Levenson & Harris (2012)

RESIDENCE RESTRICTIONS AND TRANSIENCE



Levenson, Ackerman, Socia, & Harris (2013)

Levenson, Ackerman, & Harris (2013)

ARE SORN SYSTEMS EFFECTIVE

- Inclusion on sex offender registries significantly impacts negative emotions, which influences self-reported general and sexual recidivism
 - (Ackerman, 2009; Ackerman & Sacks, 2012)
- Little evidence that current policies reduce the incidence of rape.
 - (Ackerman, Sacks & Greenberg, 2012)

LIMITATIONS OF SORN

“Numbers can create an illusion that a very complex and ambiguous phenomenon is simple, countable, and precisely defined.”
(Stone, 2002, pg. 176)

Reactionary policies do not work.





Public
Safety

Public
Outrage

THE IMPACT OF SORN AND CJS ON INDIVIDUALS

SURVIVORS

- Criminal Justice System Foci
 - Criminal acts and actors
 - State as legal victim
 - Victim relegated to status of “witness”
 - “Real victims”

PERPETRATORS

- Little room for true accountability
- Little focus on trauma
- More than risk and need
 - Dehumanizing

THE FUNNEL AND THE TUNA NET



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION?

- Most survivors of sexual victimization know their perpetrator.
 - Less likely to be believed
 - More self-blame
 - Less likely to report
 - 17% and 29% reported to law enforcement in 2012 and 2013 (NCVS)
 - Less likely to seek out crisis services
 - 21% and 19% received services after victimization in 2012 and 2013 (NCVS)

COALITIONS AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT AND SORN

“We’re predicting a decrease in reporting due to various sex offender laws..[The laws] disallow discretion and discretion is needed...Sex offending disrupts the entire family...There needs to be a middle ground. We’ve lost focus on treatment and only focus on punishment.”

~ A Midwest CASA

FORMAL REPORTING

- Perceived negative reactions more likely
- Few crimes are forwarded for prosecution
- Rarely get convictions
- Friends perceived as more helpful
- Speaking out may have detrimental effects



Ahrens (2006); Campbell, et al., (1999); Campbell, et al, (2001); Filipas & Ullman (2001); Ullman & Filipas (2001)

SURVIVOR AND CASA PERSPECTIVES ON SORN

Accurate Public Information and Awareness

- Survivor Perspective

- Well-informed public would be more likely to believe disclosures
- This would allow survivors to ask for more support

- CASA Perspective

- Misinform the public about sexual violence
- Shifts focus from the majority of offenses to the minority
 - “Shifts focus to the least common offender”

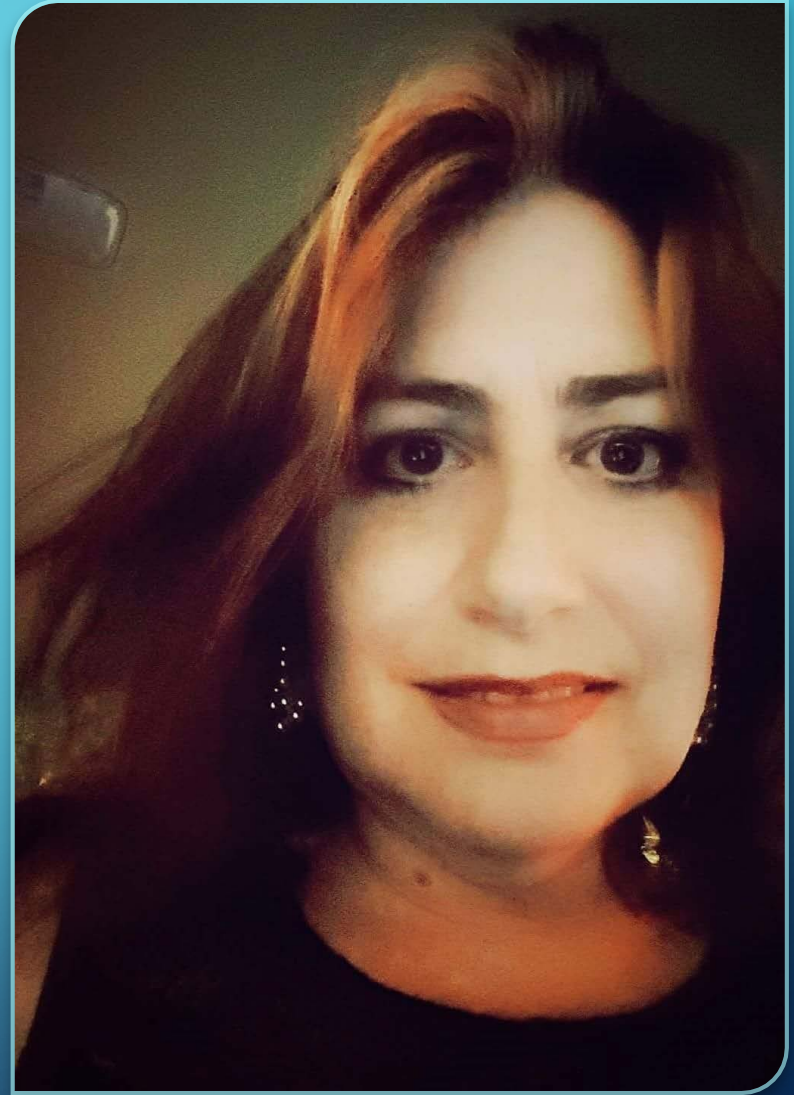
REINFORCING THE VICTIM HIERARCHY

- Spectrum of victim types categorized according to sympathy
- Prioritize the suffering of one victim type over another
- “Truly innocent victims” or “Good victims”
- Survivors see no “reflection of self” in SORN

“I feel that developing solid policies that directly positively impact the survivor post trauma decreases secondary wounding.”



“It needs to be illegal to bully a survivor, whether by a sibling, a divorce attorney, or anyone else.”



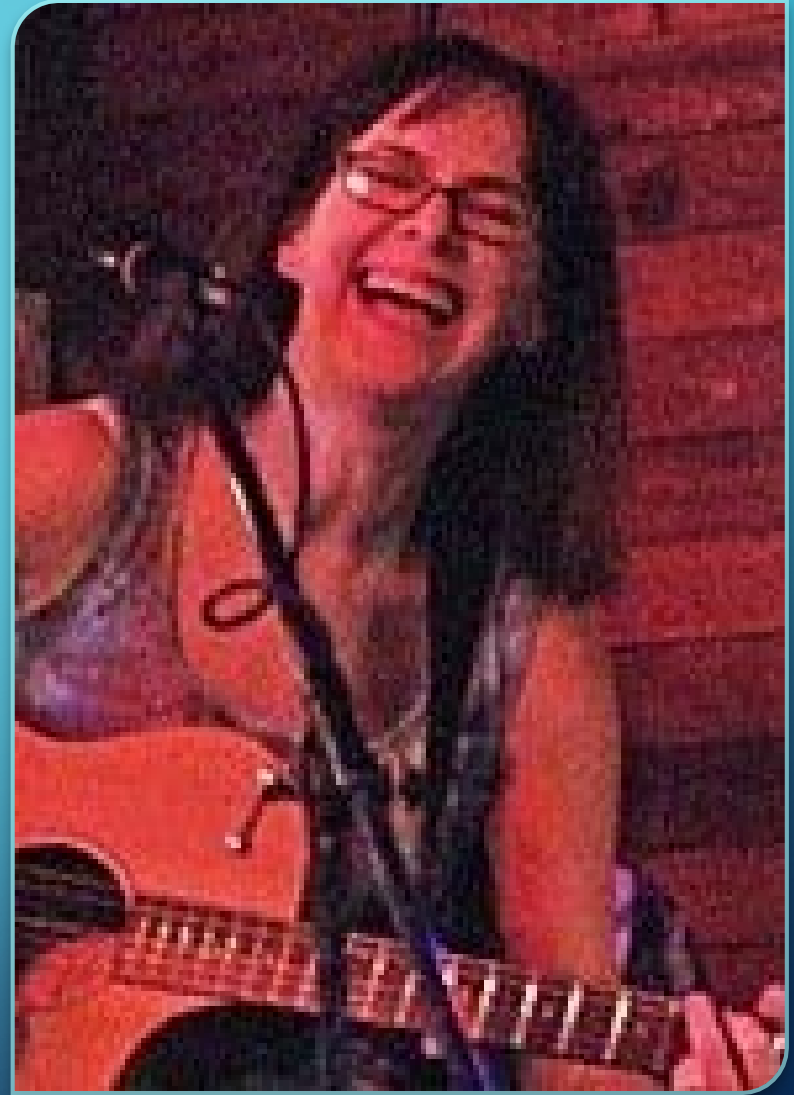
“I was numb. Pissed at myself for not fighting. Pissed at myself for putting myself in that situation. I still am. I guess it's that all too common story where the young girl likes the popular boy and I felt like no one would believe me if I did come forward. Especially since everyone there knew I had been drinking. I felt that I would be laughed at and he would be the golden child protected. He was the all star kid. I was terrified to tell anyone. I just sucked it up that no one would believe me or judge me for the situation I put myself in. I would have to just deal with it. So that's what I did. I didn't want the attention that it was going to bring on me.”





“Statute of limitations does not exist for victims. The effects of assault are life-long, and abusers should always be held accountable.”

“Here is my survivor pic. My brother sexually abused me when I was 6 years old, and I was also assaulted in college my senior year. I like this picture because I not only survived but thrived.”





“The journey from victim to survivor is arduous. Unfortunately, the criminal justice process ends where that process begins. There is definitely a lack of support for victims through criminal justice agencies in the U.S.”

I was raped at knifepoint in my home by a complete stranger in 1995. My hand was severed and the assailant stayed in the apartment for over an hour. The crime has never been solved. In 2000, I requested law enforcement to re-open my case based on new DNA laws, and have had to update them on changing statute of limitations laws ever since. One cold case detective gave me hope around the familial DNA search idea. Sadly, he retired and the latest cold case detectives says my rape wasn't violent enough to qualify for a familial DNA search. **Not violent enough. Not violent enough? Not violent enough!** I plan to continue pursuing justice, I plan to continue fighting, but right now I'm taking a break. It's exhausting to do this on my own.



NO REFLECTION OF SURVIVORS IN CURRENT POLICY



SORN – ADDRESSING SURVIVOR NEEDS (BANDY, 2014)

	REGISTRATION	NOTIFICATION	RESIDENCE RESTRICTIONS	ELECTRONIC MONITORING	MANDATORY HIV TESTING
Supportive victim disclosure opportunities	NA	NA	-	NA	NA
Accurate public education	-	-	-	-	NA
Immediate and long-term victim services	NA	NA	NA	NA	+

COUNTERPRODUCTIVE FOR PERPETRATORS, TOO.



THE SURVIVOR PERSPECTIVE

Survivors need “social acknowledgement and support...a sense of power and control over their own lives... and an opportunity to tell their stories in their own way.”

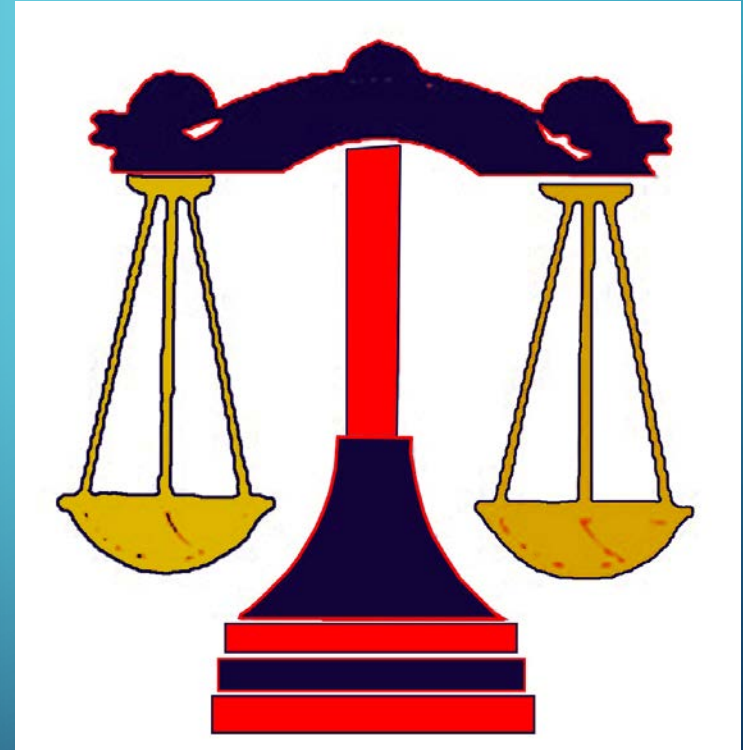
~ Herman (2005, pg. 574)



WHAT IS JUSTICE?

“Justice is achieved when all stakeholders are satisfied with the process and the outcome is fair to all participants.”

~ International Association of Chiefs of Police (2000)

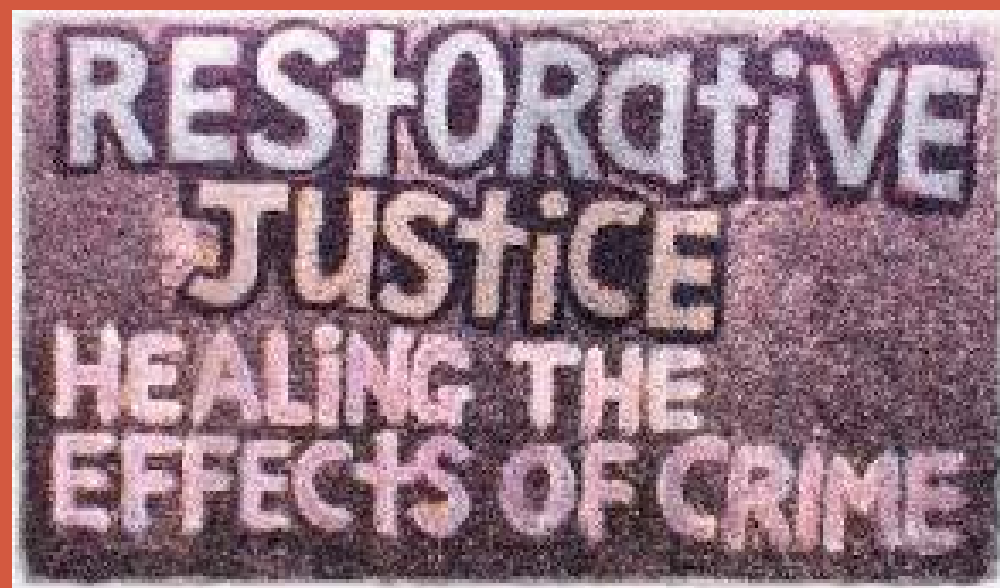


IMPACTS OF SEXUAL TRAUMA



- 81% of female and 35% of male survivors report both short and long-term psychological impacts.
- Frequent headaches, chronic pain, difficulty sleeping, anxiety, depression, guilt, fear, sexual dysfunction, boundary setting, low self-esteem, and dissociation.
- 13 times more likely than non-crime victims to have attempted suicide.

Hurt people
hurt people.



WHAT DO VICTIMS/ SURVIVORS NEED?

Accountability

- Name the wrongdoing
- Acknowledge harm

Voice

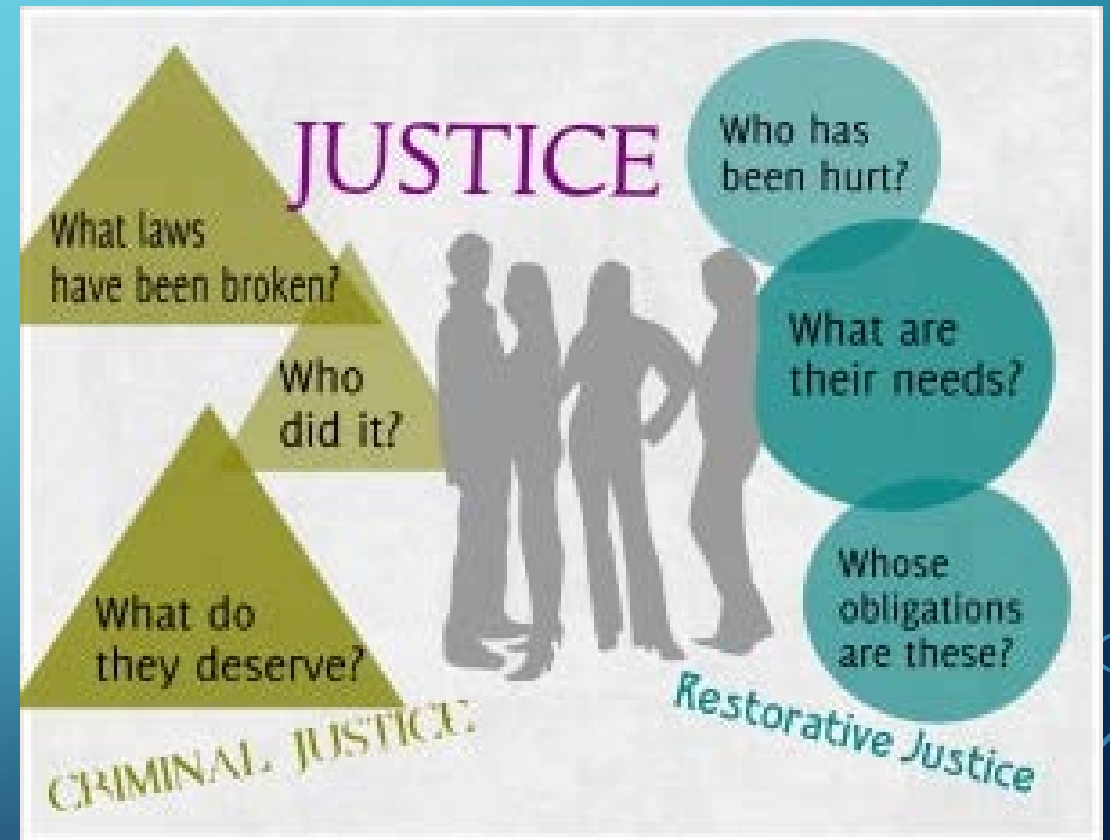
- Telling how their life is affected
- Validation that it was not their fault

Answers

- Why did you do this to me?
- What are you doing to make changes?

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- A framework
- Emphasis on harm caused, not law violation



AIMS OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Victims can tell
their story


Explain the
physical,
psychological,
social, financial
impact on their
lives

Explore
unanswered
questions about
the crime and
the offender

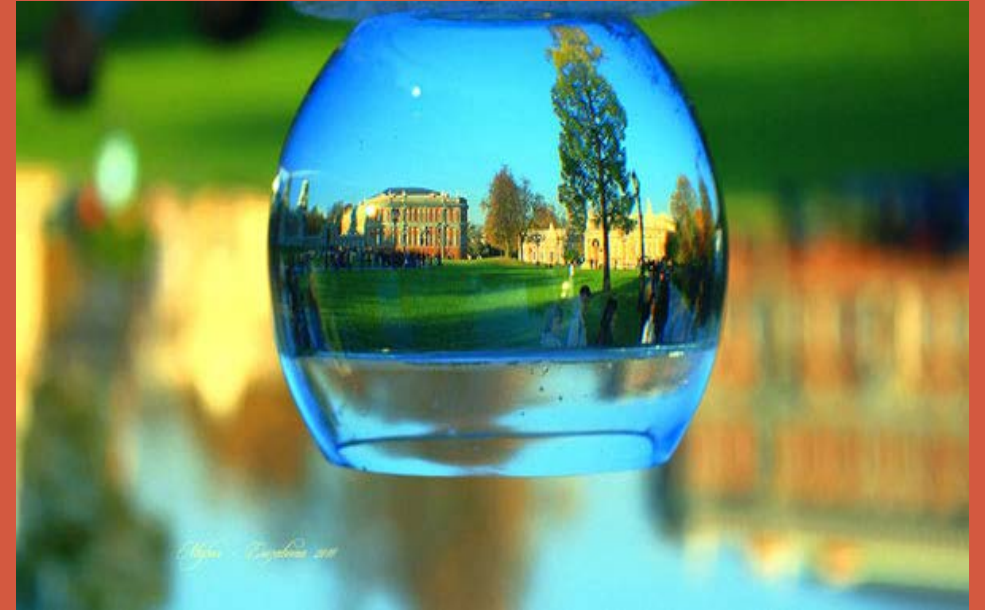
Participate
directly in
addressing the
harms caused



DR. CLAIRE CHUNG, RAPE SURVIVOR

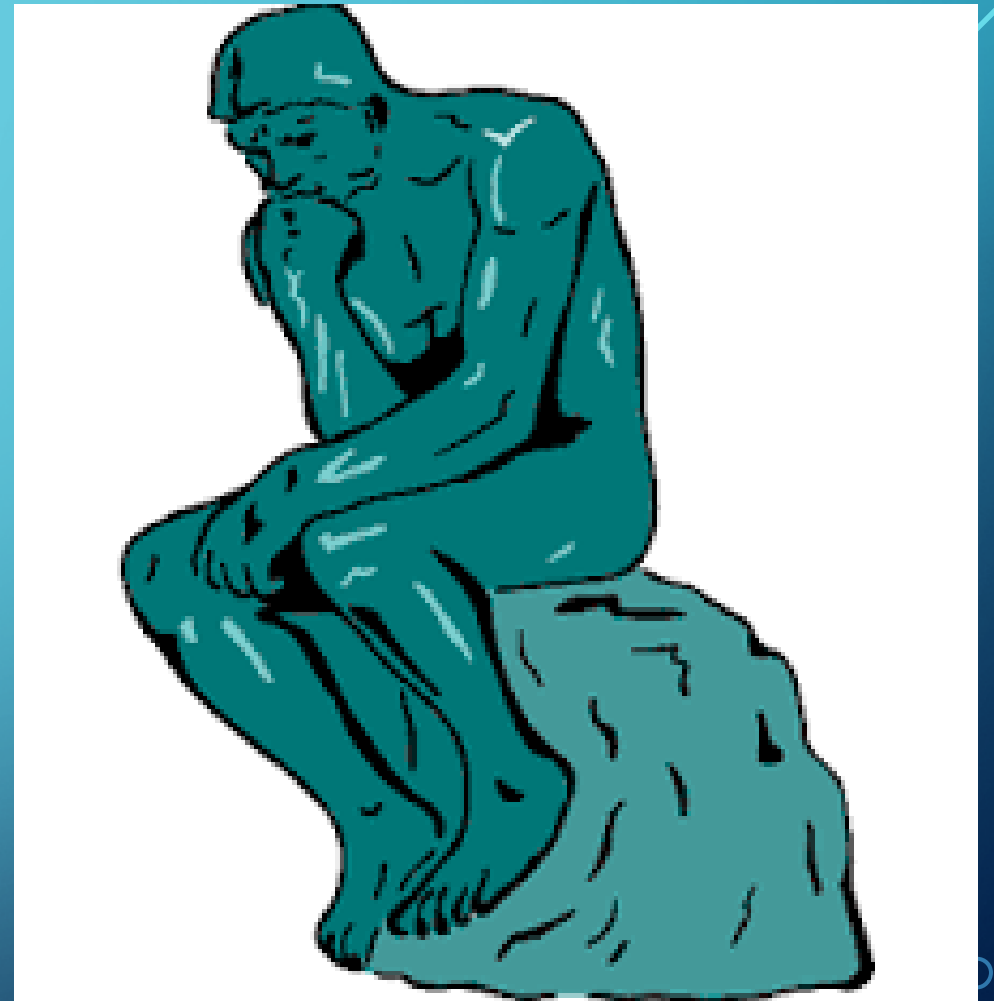
- “Hearing the offender say sorry has been a hugely positive step in my recovery and it has helped me overcome the perception that I am just another forgotten statistic.”
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REFLECTIONS



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“She really makes me think...”

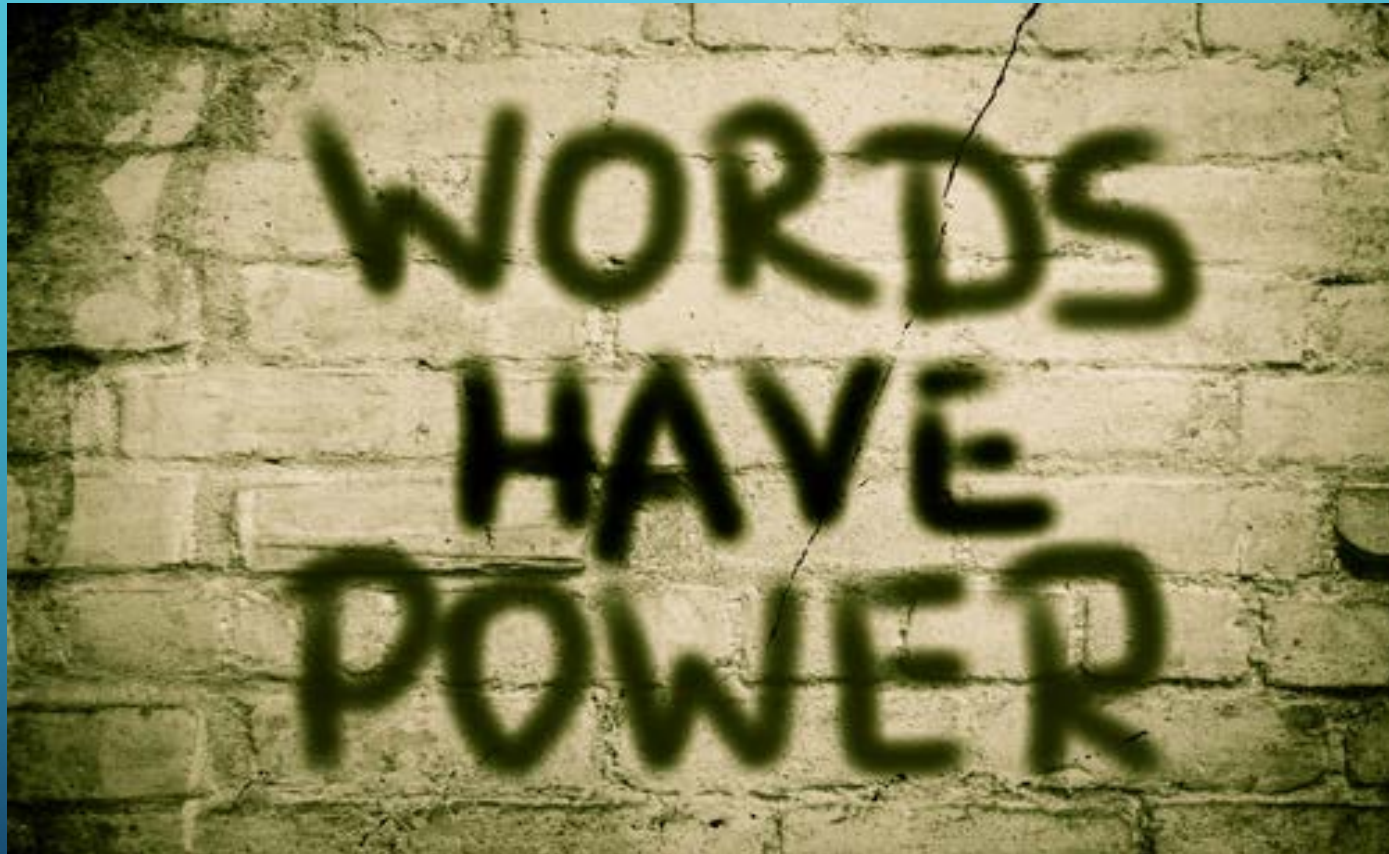




HELLO,
MY NAME
IS

“What’s in a name?”

The weight of words...





POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policymakers and the public can assist survivors and prevent future victimization by:

- Providing opportunities to talk about victimization without being judged
- Demanding and supporting accurate and widespread prevention education
 - Comprehensive sex education in schools
 - Foster a well-informed public
- Funding and supporting access to immediate and long-term, sustainable services for both victims and offenders
 - Free or affordable mental health services
 - Access to safe housing
- Wholesight
 - Prediction that even fewer will report as laws become more harsh



FINAL NOTE

- There is a place for post-sentence management tools
- Being smart on sex crimes is not the same as being soft
- Harm reduction and prevention are crucial

