



Pennsylvania Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws
A Pennsylvania Safe and Just for All

PARSOL's History & Position

PARSOL was founded in 2017 in response to the growing realization that sex offender registries were becoming unwieldy, unnecessarily punitive, and ineffective at their stated goal of keeping people safe from sexual harm. We are the state affiliate of the National Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws (NARSOL).

PARSOL advocates for prevention of sexual abuse within the context of public health initiatives. The "tough on crime" approach that many legislators and policy makers take towards crimes of a sexual nature may win votes, but the sense of security that public registries and related restrictions impose is a false one.

We review empirical evidence from researchers in the fields of mental health treatment for sexual offending, criminal justice, and public policy. We collect empirical research from mental health researchers as well as opinions from those in the legal arena. Two decades of research demonstrates that

- public sex offender registries are ineffective at reducing sexual offending
- rates of recidivism are low (contrary to popular belief)
- over 95% of all sexual abuse is perpetrated by 1st time offenders
- the majority of sexual offenses are committed by people who already have a relationship with their victim (as opposed to "stranger danger")

That being said, the positions PARSOL advocates for include:

- a shift away from *reactive* measures and towards *proactive* policy aimed at prevention of sexual harm before it occurs
- an end to dehumanizing, unconstitutional, and ineffective public registries
- expansion of appropriate restorative justice options when indicated