

## THE NEED FOR REFORM

Pennsylvania needs legislative reforms addressing challenges faced by individuals with IDD who commit sexual crimes, including alternative sentencing, accommodations for cognitive impairments, and access to support services for successful rehabilitation.

Due to compound challenges, removing individuals with ID from public registries warrants thoughtful consideration.



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## AUTISM, INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, AND SEXUAL OFFENSE LAWS



## THE FORGOTTEN

We continue to learn of case after case where a person with autism or another intellectual disability (ID) who commits a sexual offense receives no consideration in the courts or on PA's SORNA. Furthermore, the PA Department of Corrections and the county jails where the accused are frequently housed, pending court or placement at a State Correctional Institution, are ill-equipped to provide a safe environment for individuals with ID.

## THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND

This vulnerable population has high prevalence of sexually offending behavior due to developmental delays, lack of comprehension, and impulsive, compulsive behavior. Support team should consider these factors during criminal investigations and court proceedings.

Public registration can further restrict their access to crucial services and benefits, compounding their difficulties upon reentry into society.

## IMPROPERLY PUNISHED

Disproportionate incarceration rates underscores the pressing necessity for tailored interventions and robust support structures to tackle the root causes of criminal behavior among this demographic. In a recent study of 3,066 U.S. incarcerated individuals with sexual offenses, 19.1% had a complete or borderline ID diagnosis.

Callahan, P. A., Jeglic, E. L., & Calkins, C. (2022). Sexual Offenders with Intellectual Disabilities: An Exploratory Comparison Study in an Incarcerated U.S. Sample. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X211066825>.



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