



RATIONAL REFORM

WINTER 25-26

PARSOL NEWSLETTER

BUCKS COUNTY, PA



PARSOL believes that creating safer communities free from sexual abuse, assault, and harassment must be rooted in responsibility, education, prevention, treatment, and healing. We take an evidence-based approach to modernizing the criminal legal system, cultivating a fair and just society, honoring inherent dignity, and promoting accountability, respect, and fairness.

PARSOL's mission is to create a safer Pennsylvania through public safety policies and resources that prevent sexual harm. We advocate for prevention-based, trauma-informed, and healing-focused programs and initiatives, rooted in accountability, respect, and fairness.

Core Values: Accountability, Compassion, Fairness, Respect, Transformation

Josiah Krammes, Editor
John Dawe, Managing Director
Randall Hayes, Editor at Large

Twitter: @PARSOLOfficial
Email: contact@parsol.org
Phone: 717-820-2237

Send address corrections to: PARSOL, PO Box 123, Lehman, PA 18627-0123

PARSOL *Quarterly* is © 2024 PARSOL. All rights reserved. A publication of Pennsylvania Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws, Inc.

Pennsylvania Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws

1010 Mountain View Drive, Box 123

Lehman, PA 18627-0123

<https://parsol.org> - contact@parsol.org - 717-820-2237

The printing and mailing of the PARSOL QUARTERLY newsletter to persons who are incarcerated is made possible through the contribution of our members.
Thank you for your support.

Terminology Key: SCOPA= Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
PFR= Person Forced to Register SORNA= Sexual Offender Registration and Notification Act

A Design Note: PARSOL designs our newsletter to be offset by one page so the cover is not revealing to mail clerks or other persons who are incarcerated when sending to our supporters on the 'inside'.

Krammes Named PARSOL Chair Emeritus

At its November 16, 2025, meeting, the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws (PARSOL) voted unanimously to confer the title of Chair Emeritus upon Josiah Krammes. Krammes now joins PARSOL co-founder Theresa Robertson, Ph.D., as a member of the organization's emeritus leadership.

From 2018 to 2025, Krammes had the privilege of serving on the PARSOL Board of Directors, first as Secretary, later as Chair, and also as Chair of both the Education and Information Committee and the Legal Committee. These seven years were marked by organizational growth, rising public engagement, and a deepening commitment to evidence-based advocacy. Looking back, he is grateful for the opportunity to have helped guide PARSOL as it sharpened its mission and expanded its impact.

When Krammes joined the Board in 2018, PARSOL was just emerging and working to establish its voice in Pennsylvania's complex policy landscape. As Secretary, he focused on strengthening governance by ensuring reliable documentation, improving communication, and increasing consistency in internal processes. These structural improvements helped prepare PARSOL to grow from a small volunteer team into a coordinated statewide organization.

During this period, he also served as Chair of the Education and Information Committee, which shaped much of PARSOL's public-facing work. This included developing clearer messaging, improving how research was communicated, and increasing the reliability of the information and resources offered to impacted individuals and partners. He later chaired the Legal Committee, now a subcommittee of the Education Committee, where the work focused on responding more effectively to legal questions, analyzing emerging case law, and helping the public understand how the courts interpret Pennsylvania's sexual offense policies.

In 2024, Krammes stepped into the role of Board Chair during a pivotal moment, as PARSOL was gaining visibility and influence. As Chair, he worked with the organization to align its advocacy with modern research, including a key shift in reframing the legislative approach from reforming SORNA to modernizing it, emphasizing public safety, fairness, and evidence-based policies. PARSOL prioritized strengthening relationships with legislators, community partners, and registry-impacted individuals and families, ensuring the organization remained principled and pragmatic, responding to issues such as residency restrictions and outreach to incarcerated individuals.

In recent years, PARSOL's development has been defined by intentional growth in governance, advocacy strategy, and community support. The organization now stands on a firmer foundation, and Krammes is proud of the progress made collectively and looks forward to seeing PARSOL continue to evolve and advance evidence-based policies that promote safety, dignity, and second chances, while he continues to contribute through committee work.

Legal Happenings

New SCOPA Opinions

SCOPA's decision in *Commonwealth v. Kurtz*, 98, 99, 100 MAP 2023, marks a significant shift in how digital privacy is treated under Pennsylvania law. The Court held that individuals have no reasonable expectation of privacy in ordinary, unprotected Google search queries or related IP-address data. Because the Court found no privacy interest at stake, it declined to examine whether police had sufficient probable cause, effectively approving the use of reverse keyword search warrants—warrants that identify suspects by collecting data on everyone who searched specific terms.

This ruling departs from Pennsylvania's long tradition of interpreting Article I, Section 8 of the state Constitution to provide stronger privacy protections than the federal Fourth Amendment. In past cases, Pennsylvania courts rejected the idea that people lose constitutional protection simply because modern life requires sharing information with third parties. A forceful dissent warned that internet search histories reveal deeply personal information and that allowing broad government access risks reviving the very "general warrants" the Pennsylvania Constitution was designed to forbid.

The implications of this decision extend far beyond one criminal case. By permitting suspicionless digital dragnets, the Court has lowered the barrier for government surveillance and shifted privacy protections onto individuals' technical sophistication rather than constitutional guarantees. This decision deserves close scrutiny by lawmakers, advocates, and the public, as it reshapes the balance between public safety and personal liberty in an increasingly digital society.

In *Weatherholtz v. McKelvey*, 57 MAP 2024, SCOPA resolved a critical question left open after *K.N.B.* (a prior Court case): When does the statute of limitations begin to run for petitions under the Protection of Victims of Sexual Violence or Intimidation Act? The Court rejected the Superior Court's conclusion that the six-year clock starts at the time of the original sexual violence. Instead, it held that a claim does not accrue until an act or circumstance demonstrates a continued risk of harm, because that is when a petitioner can first meet all statutory elements required for relief.

The Court emphasized that the Act is not a tort statute designed to compensate past injury, but a prospective, protective remedy aimed at preventing future harm. Sexual violence alone does not entitle a petitioner to relief; proof of ongoing risk is required. Starting the statute of limitations before that risk exists would bar claims before they are legally actionable, effectively nullifying the Act for many victims—particularly where offenders are incarcerated for long periods or resurface years later.

This decision preserves the Act's core purpose while maintaining its built-in safeguards. Protective orders remain time-limited, judicially supervised, and subject to renewal only upon a showing of continued risk. By tying accrual to

present danger rather than historical abuse, the Court restored doctrinal consistency, corrected the misreading of *K.N.B.*, and ensured that victims are not denied protection simply because time passed before risk re-emerged.

*While PARSOL **does not give legal advice**, you can email legalinfo@parsol.org with questions about these and other cases pending in the courts.*

Letter From the Editor

We Want to Hear From YOU

We have had many great article submissions this 2025 season. From our staff and volunteers. But this year we want to hear more from you, our readers. If you have an article that you would like to see published, submit it to us at contact@parsol.org or mail it to PARSOL, PO Box 123, Lehman, PA 18627-0123. The maximum word count is as follows: main article- 1,500 words, secondary article- 1,000 words, other articles- 600 words. Our Spring edition will be published in April with a deadline of March 27. Summer will be published in July with a deadline of June 26. Autumn will be published in October with a deadline of September 25. We like to include articles that share information and knowledge, bring hope and joy, and are entertaining. If you like to write, here's your chance to share. We are open to many possibilities. Please note that you are **freely** sharing your written work with us and may be edited as needed.



The banner features a dark blue background with a light blue grid pattern. On the left, there is a white RSS feed icon. The text "Registry Matters" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font, slanted upwards from left to right. Below it, the word "podcast" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, also slanted. To the right of the text is a square QR code. At the bottom of the banner, the URL "https://RegistryMatters.co" is displayed in white. Below the URL is the text "A weekly show dedicated to the issues, and politics of the registry" in a smaller white font, followed by "find us on:" in a larger white font. Below this are several white icons representing different platforms: a globe, a video camera, a speech bubble, a microphone, a RSS feed, and a Patreon logo. At the very bottom, the text "Support us at patreon.com/registrymatters" is written in a small white font.

Registry Matters
podcast

<https://RegistryMatters.co>
A weekly show dedicated to the issues, and politics of the registry
find us on:

Support us at patreon.com/registrymatters



PARSOL Launches #StuckIn1995 Campaign with PA Capitol Event

HARRISBURG, PA – October 28, 2025 – The Pennsylvania Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws (PARSOL) Advocates gathered at the Pennsylvania Capitol Rotunda today to mark thirty years since the enactment of Pennsylvania’s Megan’s Law and to call for modernization of the state’s sexual offense laws which were signed into law by then- Governor Tom Ridge on October 21, 1995.

“Our lives have changed since 1995. You’ll all recognize Microsoft’s groundbreaking system, Windows 95. But is anyone still using that? Pennsylvania’s registry laws are stuck in 1995 while everything else has moved forward,” remarked Robert Ciccinielli (Havertown), PARSOL board member, who opened the event while advocates held signs showing nostalgia from that year including props from the era including the O.J. Simpson verdict headline news, a poster from the hit 90’s TV show “ER”, the dial-up internet modem, a 22-cent postage stamp, and the floppy disk drive.

Speakers included Josiah Krammes (Pottsville), PARSOL Chair, Joey Nicholson (Coatesville), founder of the Pathfinder Reentry Project, State Representatives Emily Kinkead (D-Pittsburgh) and Tim Briggs (D-King of Prussia), and Olivia Schmidt (Sharon), PARSOL Advocates secretary.

PARSOL Chair Josiah Krammes Offers Remarks

“Sexual violence destroys lives and tears apart families, which is why our response to sexual harm must be both compassionate to survivors and effective at preventing future harm. We should never tolerate approaches that minimize these crimes or fail to center victim safety,” urged Krammes. “That’s precisely why evidence-based prevention and smart resource allocation

matter so much—victims deserve policies that actually work, not just ones that sound tough.”

“Modernizing the system means focusing resource on current risk, not decades-old cases. That’s how you protect families,” he noted, citing multiple studies from the U.S. Department of Justice, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, and Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

Joey Nicholson Reflects on Lived Experience



Nicholson, sharing experiences from PARSOL’s statewide programs, told several personal stories of how the registry hinders successful reintegration—even among those who have completed treatment and proven stability. “When policies lack nuance, entire families carry the weight,” said Nicholson. “Modern times demand modern policies built on what we now know about accountability, growth,

and rehabilitation.”

Reflecting on his fourteen years of incarceration, Nicholson added, “Real transformation doesn’t begin in a cell, it begins in the heart, and then it transforms your mind. I came home with one goal – to help others find that meaningful spark before the system or life breaks them. These programs are now supported by law enforcement, treatment providers, correctional administrators, and members of the faith community – people who believe in modernization over marginalization.”

Reps. Kinkead and Briggs Add Legislator Support



Rep. Kinkead noted that supporting survivors of sexual violence and modernizing laws that hold perpetrators of harm accountable are not incompatible. “The registry harms people who have been held accountable but cannot find housing, jobs, or a place in the community where they can consistently give back. When we put people in a system where they are ostracized, they disappear,” she said.

Kinkead added that by using what we’ve learned over thirty years to modernize the law and actively include those who have committed offenses in the solution, “... we reduce the number of victims that happen. We prevent people from committing crimes because we are supporting not just survivors but the safety of the entire community.”

“People who are willing to do the work, get better, learn from their mistakes, make amends and pay their debt to society deserve the opportunity to be a full member of it if we are willing as legislators to be bold, take a stand and ensure we are making evidence-based policies,” she concluded. “These are common sense reforms from thirty years of understanding what works and what doesn’t. [Legislators] cannot be held in the past because we are afraid to make changes and how it will be perceived.

Chairman Briggs echoed Kinkead’s resolve adding, “Too many times this issue seems too difficult for legislators to get their heads around and they want to continue that thirty-year-old approach. Despite this, we need to modernize the registry to allow individuals who no longer pose a risk to be removed from the list and ensure the tools necessary for safe communities including evidence-based assessments, ensuring individuals who need services are receiving them.”



“There is no time better than the present to start tackling these issues. Today’s kickoff reinforces the desire to keep our communities safe by using modern thinking to address these issues in a fair and compassionate way. We look forward to working with PARSOL moving forward,” Briggs concluded.

No Room at the Home: Barriers to Long-Term Care For PFRs

When criminologist Stephanie Jerstad’s former client, a registered ‘sex offender’ died waiting to find a long-term care facility in Illinois that would accept him, she dedicated her dissertation research to studying if facility-level characteristics matter in explaining organizational policies for the admission of persons on the sex offender registry. This issue intersects with public health, social justice, and human rights, requiring a closer examination of legislative, institutional, and societal factors.

Jerstad’s workshop at the PARSOL 2024 Fall Conference explored the challenges associated with long-term care access for aging individuals with criminal histories, highlighting the restrictive policies and misconceptions that exacerbate these barriers, emphasizing the need for ethical and evidence-based approaches to care. This article highlights her research and findings as presented.

The Problem of Access

The denial of long-term care for individuals with sexual harm convictions has created a public health issue of growing concern. Stories from across the

country illustrate the severity of the problem. For example, a 76-year-old man in Illinois was denied admission to over 200 long-term care facilities due to his registry status. Unable to find placement, he died in the hospital. Such cases demonstrate how existing policies can have devastating consequences, particularly for those in advanced age who require specialized medical support.

This exclusion arises from legislative barriers, institutional risk aversion, and pervasive societal stigma. Many facilities refuse to consider applicants with any criminal histories, citing potential liability and community concerns, even when such individuals pose minimal risk. This is especially true for individuals with sexual offenses.

Legislative and Regulatory Barriers

Twelve states, along with select areas in Florida, have implemented laws dictating how long-term care facilities should handle individuals on sex offender registries. These laws, passed largely between 2005 and 2010, emphasize restrictive measures, including:

- **Mandatory Notifications:** In some jurisdictions (not Pennsylvania), facilities must inform staff, residents, and sometimes the public about the presence of an individual with a criminal history.
- **Registry Screening:** Admission processes often disqualify individuals based on registry checks, regardless of health status or age.
- **Segregation Policies:** Some states mandate that residents with criminal histories be housed separately or under heightened supervision. In Pennsylvania, no more than five individuals designated sexually violent predators (SVPs) may live in one facility.
- **Residency Restrictions:** In some states proximity to schools, parks, or daycares often disqualifies facilities from admitting individuals on registries. While this does not apply to Pennsylvania, if someone is on parole or probation, their release conditions may contain these kinds of restrictions.

Such measures are frequently justified as protective but effectively act as exclusionary practices. For instance, Illinois requires detailed disclosures about an individual's criminal history to staff and other residents, a policy that further stigmatizes and isolates this population.

Impact of Misconceptions and Risk Aversion

A significant driver of these restrictive policies is the misconception that individuals with sexual harm convictions are highly likely to re-offend. Research indicates that the recidivism rates for this population are among the lowest of all criminal groups, particularly as individuals age. After age 60, the likelihood of re-offense drops to nearly zero. Despite these findings, public

perceptions—shaped by media portrayals and societal fears—continue to depict this group as perpetual threats.

Institutional policies often reflect these unfounded fears. Many facilities cite risk management and liability concerns as reasons for denial. Administrators are particularly wary of potential lawsuits or negative publicity, especially in cases where they are required to disclose the presence of residents with prior convictions.

Interestingly, some studies suggest that facilities are more concerned about residents with cognitive impairments, such as dementia than those with criminal histories. Evidence shows that individuals with conditions like Alzheimer's are more likely to exhibit inappropriate sexual behavior due to their illness. Yet, facilities remain focused on excluding those with past convictions, even when there is no evidence of ongoing risk.

State and Facility-Level Factors

Certain state and facility characteristics significantly influence whether individuals with criminal histories can access care:

- **Punitive State Policies:** States with strict residency restrictions, civil commitment laws, or high incarceration rates are more likely to enforce exclusionary practices in long-term care.
- **Facility Ownership:** Nonprofit facilities are far more likely than for-profit ones to admit individuals with criminal histories. Nonprofit organizations often approach admissions holistically, considering the individual's health needs and overall circumstances rather than solely their criminal record.
- **Administrator Backgrounds:** Facilities led by administrators with nursing or healthcare experience are more likely to accept applicants based on their medical needs. Conversely, those with business backgrounds tend to prioritize risk management and liability, resulting in more exclusionary policies.

Broader Ethical and Public Health Implications

The denial of long-term care access raises critical ethical questions. Regardless of their past, every individual deserves humane treatment and healthcare access. By excluding individuals with criminal histories, particularly those who are elderly and frail, facilities contribute to a public health crisis that disproportionately affects vulnerable populations.

There are also significant implications for social justice. Denying access to care perpetuates cycles of marginalization and reinforces stigma, often exacerbating the very conditions that policies aim to address. Individuals on registries have already served their sentences and reintegrated into society, yet they continue to face lifelong discrimination due to outdated and overly broad registry requirements.

Additionally, policies that deny care based on past convictions often need to account for the aging process. As people age, their health deteriorates, and their risk of re-offense diminishes. Ignoring these factors creates a system prioritizing punitive measures over evidence-based approaches to care.

Research Findings on Long-Term Care Exclusions

Research reveals that the current exclusionary practices are rooted in myths rather than data. For example:

- **Recidivism Rates:** Individuals with sexual harm convictions have recidivism rates between 5–15%, with rates dropping significantly after age 60. This is far lower than for other offender groups.
- **Time Since Conviction:** Most facilities do not consider the time elapsed since an individual's offense. A conviction from decades earlier is treated like a recent offense, even when the individual has demonstrated rehabilitation and good behavior.
- **Universal Exclusion:** Many facilities deny admissions without distinguishing between the severity or circumstances of the offense. This one-size-fits-all approach fails to consider the unique circumstances of each individual.

Potential Solutions & Next Steps

Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach that balances public safety with ethical care. Potential strategies include:

- **Legislative Reform:** Revisiting registry laws and long-term care policies to reflect evidence-based practices rather than fear-driven measures. This could include removing lifetime registry requirements for low-risk individuals or creating pathways for removal based on rehabilitation and time offense-free.
- **Data Collection and Advocacy:** Gathering comprehensive data on the number of individuals affected by these policies can strengthen advocacy efforts. Clear evidence of the scale of the problem is essential for driving legislative and institutional change.
- **Education and Awareness:** Dispelling myths about recidivism and risk through public awareness campaigns can help reduce stigma and foster more compassionate policies. Facilities and policymakers must be educated about the realities of risk and the ethical implications of denial.
- **Collaboration with Nonprofit Organizations:** Nonprofit facilities have demonstrated greater willingness to admit individuals with criminal histories. Expanding partnerships with these organizations can provide immediate relief while broader reforms are pursued.

Conclusion

The exclusion of aging individuals with criminal histories from long-term care represents a critical intersection of public health, social justice, and human

rights. Current policies, driven by myths and societal stigma, deny essential care to a vulnerable population and perpetuate cycles of marginalization. By prioritizing evidence-based approaches, fostering dialogue, and enacting meaningful reforms, it is possible to create a system that balances safety with compassion and dignity. Addressing this issue is a matter of public health and a testament to the values of equity and humanity that underpin a just society.

The Problematic Reality of Lifetime Registration Under PA's SORNA

Pennsylvania's "Sexual Offender" Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) was designed to enhance public safety by tracking individuals convicted of sexual offenses. However, an analysis of the current registry data reveals a troubling reality: more than half of the state's Persons Forced to Register (PFRs) are on the list for life. This raises serious concerns about the effectiveness, fairness, and consequences of Pennsylvania's approach to sex offense registration.

The Breakdown: A System Overloaded with Lifetime PFRs

According to the latest data, Pennsylvania has 24,214 active PFRs under SORNA. Of these, 13,395 individuals (55%) are classified as lifetime PFRs.

Of the 13,395 lifetime PFRs:

- 10,483 individuals (78%) are on for life because of their offense category.
- 2,912 individuals (22%) were assessed by the Sexual Offender Assessment Board as having a mental abnormality or personality disorder that predisposes them to sexually re-offend.

This distribution suggests that Pennsylvania's registry is largely offense-based rather than risk-based, meaning that thousands of individuals are subjected to lifetime registration without a meaningful assessment of their actual likelihood of reoffending.

Does Lifetime Registration Improve Public Safety?

Research on sex offense recidivism consistently shows that most individuals convicted of a sexual offense do not re-offend. Studies have found that sexual recidivism rates are significantly lower than public perception suggests, with estimates often below 10% over a long period.

SORNA's broad application of lifetime registration to more than half of all PFRs raises the question: Is Pennsylvania truly focusing resources on those who pose the greatest risk? By keeping thousands of people on the registry indefinitely, law enforcement and community monitoring efforts may become diluted, reducing effectiveness in identifying and preventing actual threats to public safety.

The Consequences of Lifetime Registration

The impact of lifetime registration is profound and far-reaching. For those labeled as lifetime PFRs, the consequences include:

1. Barriers to Housing and Employment

Lifetime registration creates severe obstacles in securing stable housing and employment. Many landlords and employers refuse to rent to or hire individuals on the registry, regardless of their actual risk level. This contributes to homelessness, instability, and economic hardship—factors that can increase, rather than decrease, recidivism risks.

2. Law Enforcement Resource Drain

With more than half of Pennsylvania's registry dedicated to lifetime PFRs, law enforcement must allocate significant resources to tracking thousands of individuals who may not pose any ongoing risk to public safety. This diverts attention from monitoring truly dangerous individuals and investigating new offenses.

3. Social Stigma and Community Impact

Being labeled a lifetime PFR carries extreme social consequences. Individuals on the registry often face ostracization, harassment, and vigilante violence, making reintegration into society nearly impossible. This not only harms the PFRs but also affects their families and communities, leading to generational cycles of hardship and marginalization.

The 25-Year Relief Mechanism: Too Little, Too Late?

According to § 9799.15 of Pennsylvania's SORNA statute, there is a mechanism for lifetime PFRs to petition for exemption from registration requirements after 25 years. This applies to individuals required to register under subsections (a)(3), (5), (6), and (7), which include:

- Tier III (lifetime registration)
- Sexually violent delinquent children (lifetime registration)
- Sexually violent predators (lifetime registration)
- Certain individuals subject to registration based on requirements from other jurisdictions (lifetime registration)

While this mechanism may seem like a pathway to relief, it remains problematic. By the time an individual becomes eligible to petition for exemption, 25 years of their most productive years have already passed. In that time, PFRs have likely faced chronic unemployment, housing instability, social isolation, and extreme stigma. Even if they are ultimately removed from the registry, the damage to their lives is already done. This prolonged period of punishment contradicts evidence-based rehabilitation principles and does little to promote reintegration or reduce risk.

Is There a Smarter Approach?

Rather than relying on an offense-based approach that applies blanket lifetime registration, Pennsylvania could benefit from adopting a risk-based system. Such a system would:

- Utilize individualized risk assessments rather than automatic lifetime registration.
- Focus law enforcement resources on monitoring high-risk individuals, rather than maintaining an overburdened system.
- Implement clear pathways for PFRs to demonstrate rehabilitation and earn removal from the registry through good conduct.

Pennsylvania's SORNA registry, as currently structured, is deeply flawed. With more than half of all PFRs placed on lifetime registration, the system prioritizes punishment over public safety, fails to account for individual risk levels, and creates unnecessary social and economic barriers that can increase the very risks it seeks to prevent. A more evidence-based approach is needed—one that prioritizes true risk assessment, fair treatment, and effective resource allocation.

Without meaningful reform, Pennsylvania will continue to face the legal, financial, and social costs of an ineffective and overly bloated system.

***To our members who are incarcerated:
Please tell your family members to sign up
with PARSOL to receive updates.***

They can reach out to us at
contact@parsol.org and should include
their mailing address and **your**
information so we can connect them with
resources.

RATIONAL REFORM Book Review

Review by Olivia.

Dear Jacob: A Mother's Journey of Hope

by Patty Wetterling & Joy Baker

I have to admit, as someone who is a true crime addict, I tend to be a tad bit desensitized to stories such as this one, but Patty Wetterling and Joy Baker (her co-author) do such a thorough job at describing the most intimate and desperate of emotions, right along side the most matter-of-fact political and advocational logistical tasks, that I found myself crying more than once. "Dear Jacob" is the story of 11 year old Jacob Wetterling, who was abducted just down the road from his family home, in 1989. Sadly, the case remained unsolved until 2016, when a man was arrested for the abduction and murder of Jacob.

Many child abduction cases are, unfortunately, sexually motivated in nature. As was Jacob's. Being a part of PARSOL and believing in what this organization stands for - that through prevention-based, trauma/treatment-informed, and healing-focused legislative and public policy initiatives that respect our Constitution and all people's dignity, people can and DO change - it was incredibly interesting to read this story as someone who is justice and registry impacted. I am sure that "people like us" likely were not Mrs. Wetterling's target audience.

I have another confession. Though I really enjoyed the true crime aspect of this book, when she began talking about politics, specifically, when she started advocating for a "sex offender registry", I rolled my eyes. More than once. But then I remembered, this happened 30 years ago. Mrs. Wetterling has since stopped advocating for registries, but instead for the treatment of persons with a sexual offense. I wish this book would have gone into that perspective switch, but I acknowledge that this was not the point of her book.

Overall, this was an interesting read. Hearing about the loss of Jacob, the support of their small community and beyond, the grieving process, themes of never giving up hope, doing all that a person can to get answers and justice for those that cannot fight for themselves, and so, so much more, all through the eyes of a mother whose son was abducted, assaulted, and murdered was fascinating and inspiring. Patty Wetterling is a strong and dedicated mother; someone I hope to emulate in my own personal life. I highly recommend "Dear Jacob".

The next book to be read as part of PARSOL's book club is "Atmosphere" by Taylor Jenkins Reid. We will meet via Zoom on February 17, 2026 at 7pm. We hope you will join us!

Click on the following link to learn more about the club's upcoming schedule and register: <https://parsol.org/bookclub>.

Check out all our Book Suggestions at [PARSOL.org/books](https://parsol.org/books)



Announcing a New Online Resource from PARSOL: **The Pennsylvania Statewide Wiki**

Finding housing, employment, and other living essentials are more difficult to find if you're a PFR, but not all hope is lost. There are resources out there who are willing to help if you are willing to make the phone calls, keep appointments, and fill out the paperwork it takes to make things happen. In this issue we highlight the PARSOL Statewide Wiki.

The PARSOL Statewide Wiki is a collaborative resource dedicated to providing up-to-date, county-by-county information. It serves as a living directory and toolkit — listing every county in the Commonwealth, treatment resources approved by the Sexual Offender Assessment Board, and other relevant administrative information. Our goal is to provide individuals, advocates, and the public with accurate, accessible data to inform re-entry and community support efforts. Contributors are encouraged to submit verified information, help expand the coverage, and keep this repository current so that all Pennsylvanians — especially PFRs — can navigate the system with clarity and dignity.

You can visit the site at wiki.parsol.org.

Words From the Wise

“Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.”

— Abraham Lincoln



Lincoln's quote highlights the hypocrisy of supporting harsh systems whose burdens you will never personally endure, a parallel to how lawmakers treat SORNA. PFRs live under extreme, lifelong restrictions that policymakers themselves would never tolerate for even a day. The quote reminds us that fear-based policymaking becomes cruel when it lacks empathy and refuses to imagine the human impact. If those who support SORNA had to live under its rules, its injustices would become immediately obvious.

Our addiction to criminalizing addicts

By Sandy Rozek, NARSOL Communications Director and John Dawe, PARSOL

The latest figure for persons registered as sex offenders in the United States is over [795,000 as of August 2024](#). A very high percentage of offending behavior was for what has come to be known as CSAM, child sexual abuse material. (In the federal system, it is often still called child pornography.) For the first time, the percentage of those charged within this category **exceeded 50% of the total**. The latest available data from 2024 shows that the percentage of sexual abuse offenders sentenced for charges related to child pornography [increased to 52.8%](#). This includes behaviors ranging from viewing something accidentally, to seeking it out, to downloading, to sharing, to collecting, to production and selling.

The problem

Regardless of where one's behavior falls along that line, there is a criminal charge and a corresponding sentence meted out. Any behavior that molests a child is and should be a matter for the criminal justice system, but isn't that the end of the chain? Doesn't it start with viewing, progress to downloading, to sharing, to collecting, and then, [like most addictions](#) that need more and more to achieve the same high, move on to production? Certainly, most who view, download, even share, progress no further, but doesn't everyone who continues start with just looking?

A solution

What if, in those early stages, we treated [sex addiction](#) as we do its peer compulsions, like alcoholism or substance use disorder, rather than a crime? Accountability could still be satisfied with the threat of prosecution if the treatment program was not completed. Could that result in fewer progressions to the hands-on behaviors that wreak the most harm?

We cannot know for sure, but we do know this: **What we do now does not stop it or help prevent it.** It increases every year.

Other addictive behaviors—alcoholism, substance abuse, gambling—are known for their prominent treatment and support programs. Additionally, there are a number of sex addiction 12-step programs such as [Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous](#) and [Sex Addicts Anonymous](#). The [International Institute for Trauma and Addictions Professionals](#) credentials a variety of addiction treatment providers, including [Certified Sex Addiction Therapists](#), all who are trained in trauma-informed care, including the cycle of sexual abuse and effective ways of treatment that are not shame-based.

Think of it this way: What would happen if someone at age 13 turned to drugs and alcohol to cope with their trauma? They would become an addict, possibly land in prison, be released, receive compassionate treatment at a drug rehab, and be celebrated and even awarded for overcoming their obstacles. Now, what if that same person turned to pornography and sex at

age 13 — just when youth are discovering their sexuality? What if their journey took them, not from alcohol to party drugs to hard methamphetamines but rather to porn, more risqué porn, and finally to illegal materials? Society treats them as monsters, restricts their movement and rights, and puts them on a public list where they will be targeted with vigilantism and shame.

Sadly, the criminal legal system has yet to embrace, or often even consider, taking a trauma-informed, addiction-recovery focused model of harm prevention.

“Safe” phones

A large percentage of those in the first stages of this progression are teenage boys. Some parents, for the purpose of limiting their children’s exposure to the internet, only allow them phones that cannot access online sites. Phones made by Gabb™ are a popular brand. Advertised as “kid-safe phones,” parents like them because they protect their children from what is “out there.”

PARSOL Advisory Board member [Jennifer Weeks, Ph.D., LPC, CAADC, CMAT, CSAT-S](#), a certified sex addiction therapist based in Bethlehem, PA, writes, “You can have a phone that looks like your peers’ so you can avoid the inevitable questions that come when you pull out a flip phone.”

Ironically, the same sorts of phones, even some of the same brands, are given by probation officers to some of the registered sex offenders they monitor, and for the same reason: to prevent them from accessing the internet. Registrants with a first offense of CSAM who are on probation speak of being thankful for the restraints. **Prison doesn’t treat their addictions or their compulsions.** They aren’t sure they trust themselves. Putting barriers to access is one tool individuals with sex and pornography addiction can use to *help* prevent them from relapsing into their compulsive behaviors, but it must be accompanied by honesty, openness, and willingness to change.

Several registrants, however, familiar with the Gabb and other similar phones, have expressed a concern. It has been discovered that some of these “safe” phones allow apps to be installed that open a “keyhole” to the internet. In fact, one of the Gabb phone models includes a [disclaimer and warning to parents](#) that while their phone does not have an internet browser installed, “. . . some third-party apps contain backdoor internet access through in-app web browsers.” Probation officers handing these phones out to registrants would do well to heed the warning also.

The bigger problem

And what of the broader warning? Unless we start managing [addiction to child pornography](#) the same as other recognized addictions, with treatment and support, what do we risk?

We risk more offenders progressing through all the steps to hands-on production and significant harm. An overwhelming majority of those convicted for CSAM/child pornography are [males—99.8 percent](#). We risk the futures of the boys and young men who will find themselves making that first illegal

mouse click, making them criminals rather than addicts in treatment and recovery. We will make them registered sex offenders with all it entails: reduced expectation of meaningful employment, damaged community acceptance, destroyed social status and support, often destroyed family connections and support.

NARSOL & PARSOL believe that this risk is too great to take. For several decades, people with addiction problems have been living lives shaped by the criminal system. This has a negative impact not only on each individual but also on society as a whole.

We can stop that now. No; we **must** stop it now. Offer the option of entering a treatment program to all CSAM users who have not committed hands-on offenses. The reduction in prison costs will offset the cost of proven treatment programs.

The reduction in the number of lives lost and the benefit to society will be incalculable.

If you or someone you care about is misusing sex or pornography and you're worried they might have a problem, you can refer them to the following resources:

- B4UACT.org
- StopItNow.org
- [The Moore Center for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention's Prevention.Global](http://TheMooreCenterforChildSexualAbusePrevention.Global)
- [Fellow Travelers Sex Addiction Recovery for Minor Attracted Persons \(FTrecovery.org\)](http://FellowTravelersSexAddictionRecoveryforMinorAttractedPersons(FTrecovery.org))
- [Sexual Life and Legal Consequences \(slaadvi.org/legal\)](http://slaadvi.org/legal)

Pennsylvania's Fearless support meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month. They run from 4:00 to 5:30 and are open to Pennsylvanians who are affected by PA's registry (this includes registrants, family, and friends) and those who live in neighboring states and regularly travel to PA. We use a 12-step and 12-tradition-inspired format.



Fearless is a safe environment free from law enforcement or treatment professionals – a place to vent and connect with people “who get it.”

To learn more or sign up for the next meeting, call 717-820-2237 ext. 3 or go to <https://parsol.org/fearless>.

PARSOL Board News & Updates

By John Dawe, Managing Director



New Emeritus Director: At its November 16, 2025, meeting, the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws (PARSOL) voted unanimously to confer the title of Chair Emeritus upon Josiah Krammes. Krammes now joins PARSOL co-founder Theresa Robertson, Ph.D., as a member of the organization's emeritus leadership.

2026 Strategic Plan Update: At its December 17, 2025 meeting, the PARSOL Board approved the following updates to its strategic statements



- **Core Values:** Accountability, Compassion, Fairness, Respect, Transformation
- **Core Beliefs Statement:** PARSOL believes that creating safer communities free from sexual abuse, assault, and harassment must be rooted in responsibility, education, prevention, treatment, and healing. We take an evidence-based approach to modernizing the criminal legal system, cultivating a fair and just society, honoring inherent dignity, and promoting accountability, respect, and fairness.
- **Mission Statement:** PARSOL's mission is to create a safer Pennsylvania through public safety policies and resources that prevent sexual harm. We advocate for prevention-based, trauma-informed, and healing-focused programs and initiatives, rooted in accountability, respect, and fairness.

Furthermore, the Board approved the following strategic plan goals for 2026:

- Coalition Building via the PARSOL Safer Pennsylvania Plan
- Support Persons with Sexual Harm Convictions & Families
- Advocate for Public Policy & Legislative Action
- Raise awareness of PARSOL, its mission, core values, and opportunities



PARSOL is committed to educating the public and policy makers about the inadequacy of Pennsylvania's Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) and advocating for policies supported by empirical research and endorsed by criminal legal system reform experts.

OUR POSITIONS

Public registries are dehumanizing and ineffective.

Alternatives that promote public safety but focus on person-first, strengths-based measures are key.

Sexual harm is a preventable public health issue.

Education, awareness, and evidence-based prevention measures are a critical factor in preventing harm outside of the criminal legal system.

Carveouts based on crime class are discrimination.

Excluding those with registry requirements from policy and legislative reform measures creates significant reentry barriers and are unnecessary when evidence-based risk assessments are available.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

- All sexual abuse is unacceptable
- Prevention, treatment, and healing are possible.
- People can and do change.
- Sexual offense policy and laws should work for all through prevention-based, trauma-informed, and healing-focused legislative and public policy initiatives that respect our Constitution and all people's dignity.
- Once an individual has completed their sentence, their debt to society should be considered paid, and no law, whether punitive or regulatory, should prolong or add to that sentence.



717-820-2237



PARSOL.org



@PARSOOfficial

If you are a person who is incarcerated...

Did you get this newsletter from a friend? Want to be added to our mailing list?

Have a loved one send your mailing address and details to contact@parsol.org or send us a letter requesting to be added to our mailing list at: PARSOL; PO Box 123; Lehman, PA 18627-0123

Remember, PARSOL cannot offer legal advice. Requests for legal advice or direct financial support will not be answered.

Note: *If you received this newsletter mailed to you, you're already on our list.*

Name: _____

Inmate Number: _____

Current Facility: _____

Contact Person on the Outside: _____

Contact Person's Email Address: _____

Contact Person's Phone Number: _____

Anticipated Release Date: _____

[] If you are in a Pennsylvania DOC Facility, check this box. Otherwise, fill out the below information.

If you are *not* in a Pennsylvania DOC State Correctional Institution, please provide your full mailing address for receiving publications:

If your mailing address for receiving letters differs, please indicate that here:

Rational Reform Newsletter
PO Box 123
Lehman, PA 18627