

# Sex Offender Management County Principles and Policies

## Preamble

California's sex offender registration policy dates back to 1947 when California was the first state to adopt a state sex offender registry. Given the sheer size of California and the long history of sex offender registration, it is not surprising that we have more sex offenders than any other state in the United States.

Currently there are approximately 90,000 identified sex offenders in California. Each year there are 8,000 new felony sex offense convictions in California with approximately 700 offenders released from prison each month. There are an estimated 11,200 sex offenders living in the community under parole supervision and 10,000 living in the community under the jurisdiction of county probation departments.<sup>1</sup>

Given the high numbers of sex offenders who are presently not being supervised — approximately 75 percent, it is imperative that counties develop a strategy to 1) educate county residents, 2) effectively manage the sex offender population, which may or may not coincide with existing state policy, 3) assess which sex offenders are at the highest risk to re-offend and thus in need of monitoring and 4) partner with other state and local organizations that assist in supervision of sex offenders.

To that end, CSAC has adopted the following principles and policy on sex offender management. Because this is an emerging and complex policy area, CSAC recognizes that this document will likely evolve to reflect, among other things, court decisions and changes in best practices.

## Fundamental Principles and Policies

- Any effective sex offender management policy **should contain restriction clauses** that do not focus on where a sex offender lives but rather on the offender's movements. Counties believe an offender's activities and whereabouts pose a greater danger than his or her residence. Therefore, any strategy should consider the specific offense of the sex offender and prohibit his/her travel to areas that relate to their specific offense.
- Each county, when taking actions to address and/or improve sex offender management within its boundaries, should do so in a manner that does not create difficulties for other counties to manage the sex offender population within their jurisdiction.
- There are many community misconceptions about how to best monitor the sex offender population, how sex offenders are currently monitored and the threats sex offenders do and do not pose to communities. Any comprehensive sex

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<sup>1</sup> California Sex Offender Management Task Force: Full Report - 2007

offender management program must contain a **community education** component for it to be successful.

- Supervision programs administered at the local level will require **stable and adequate funding from the State** to ensure that the programs are appropriately staffed, accessible to local law enforcement departments, and effective.
- Global Positioning Systems (GPS) devices are but one of a multitude of tools that can be used simultaneously to monitor and supervise sex offenders. California counties believe that if the State is to adopt the use of GPS to monitor sex offenders a common system should be developed. This system should be portable and accessible no matter where an offender travels within California.
- Counties and the state should rely more heavily on the use of risk and needs assessments to determine how to allocate resources. These assessments will allow an agency at the local level to determine who is most at risk to reoffend and in need of monitoring.
- Regional collaboration should be encouraged as a means to address sex offender management.
- The level of government with jurisdiction to supervise a sex offender (state parole or county probation) should be responsible and be given the authority for managing that offender.
- Counties believe that for any policy to work, local governments and the State must work collaboratively to manage this population of offenders. The passage of Jessica's Law (Proposition 83, November 2006) intensified discussions regarding sex offender management and the public's perception about effective sex offender management policies. Accordingly, state and local governments should reexamine sex offender management policies.