



**Written Testimony of
Just Future Project**

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For a Hearing on SB288, HB 2359, and HB 2342
and held on March 11, 2025

Submitted to the
Kansas Senate Judiciary Committee
and addressed to the following:

Sen. Kellie Warren, Chairwoman
Sen. Kenny Titus, Vice Chair
Sen. Ethan Corson, Ranking Member

Senate Judiciary Committee, Room 346-S
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th St., Topeka, Kansas 66612

Chairwoman Warren, Vice Chair Titus, and Ranking Member Corson:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Galen Baughman. I'm the Executive Director of Just Future Project. We are a national policy advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C.

Just Future Project focuses on what I think of as the “deep end” of the criminal legal system — we specialize in systems of permanent punishment and perpetual pariahdom.¹ We know that the worst abuses of state power are almost always visited upon the most marginalized people in our society. As the bill under consideration today by this Committee clearly shows, that group is people living with an historical sex-related conviction.

Keeping kids safe is a universal value. But SB 288 isn't designed to do that. This bill is a political overreaction to a news story — it is not a serious policy based on evidence.

Allow me to review the the numbers that paint this picture:

- **Ninety-five percent** of sex-related crimes are committed by someone who has never been convicted of a sex-related crime in the past.² These are, by definition, first-time offenses.
- **Ninety-three percent** of sex-related crimes involving children are committed by a family member or friend — someone known to the child.³ Not a stranger.
- **Ninety-two point three percent** of persons with a past sex-related conviction do not reoffend in a 9-year follow-up period, reflecting a 7.7 percent recidivism rate for sex crimes.⁴

The vast majority of people released after a sex-related conviction do not commit a new sex-related crime. Most new sex crimes committed by someone after leaving prison are actually committed by the 3858 people walking out of KDOC every year who were not imprisoned for a sex crime⁵.

¹ There are hundreds, if not thousands of articles, concluding that registration & notification laws are ineffective at crime prevention and may actually increase crime. For a meta-analysis summarizing much of that research please reference J.J. Prescott & Jonah E. Rockoff, “Do Sex offender Registration and Notification Laws Affect Criminal Behavior?” 54 *J.L. & Econ.* 161 (2011).

² Sandler, Jeffrey C.; Freeman, Naomi J.; Socia, Kelly M. (2008). "Does a watched pot boil? A time-series analysis of New York State's sex offender registration and notification law". 14 *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 4: 284–302. doi:[10.1037/a0013881](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013881)

³ Howard N. Snyder, “Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident, and Offender Characteristics,” *US Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics* (July 2000) <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/savcrle.pdf>. See Table 6. Victim-offender relationship in sexual assault at p. 10.

⁴ Mariel Alper and Matthew R. Durose, “Recidivism of Sex Offenders Released from State Prison: A 9-Year Follow-Up (2005–14),” *US Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics* (BJS) (2019) <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/rsorspovfu0514.pdf>.

⁵ Because Kansas DOC does not publish disaggregated data, we are unable to determine what portion of the 3858 persons released in FY2024 were not incarcerated for a sex-related offense. See Kansas Department of Corrections. “Graphic Highlights -- Monthly Resident Population Report (July, 2024)”, Table 2. p. 7. Available at <https://www.kdoc.bluewhaleinteractive.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/EOM-Population-YTD-FY25-as-of-July-2025-Males-Females-1.pdf>

So, what does all of this mean? SB 288 targets a group of people who are extremely *unlikely* to commit an offense involving a child, at the place they are *least* likely to commit that offense. SB 288 ignores the vast majority of sex-related crimes against children.

Residency and presence restrictions are the area of sex-related offense policy where we have some of the most resounding evidence that these policies don't work.⁶ Meanwhile, these laws are some of the most meanspirited examples of legislation because they are designed to banish people from their own communities, a form of punishment that is both ineffective and deeply unAmerican.

This Committee is considering a form of Vampire Legislation: Like phantom menaces from ages of yore, we think to create special lands where evil cannot abide. This is a 2025-version of vampires and holy ground.

The label "sex offender" has talismanic powers. The term invites us to view the person as less than human, and inspires proposals like SB 288 designed to banish people from our society.⁷

Yet virtually no one branded with this toxic label is currently causing harm — most will never cause harm again. This label confuses the issues, misdirecting attention away from public health approaches that could prevent harm to children and inspires ignorant and frankly dangerous approaches that deny our shared humanity by refusing to acknowledge the universal capacity we all possess to learn, grow, and change.

While this legislation would do nothing to protect children, I guarantee that it will harm kids. From public reports, the man whose presence inspired this legislation was attending the dance with his own child. Children doubtlessly benefit from parents and guardians participating in their lives. There are many children in Kansas with a parent living on the registry. Please consider how banishing their fathers (and sometimes mothers) from school grounds will impact those children.

Chairperson Warren, you told the press after the Blue Valley School Board Meeting: "Every legislator I have shared this story with has had a visceral reaction. It's just horror and disgust."

I ask you to legislate from a place of rational analysis, not "horror and disgust." This is a bill to placate angry parents. The children of Kansas need you to create evidence-based policies that will keep them safe — SB 288 does nothing of the sort.

I am glad to answer questions from this body pertaining to SB 288 or the broader research around persons living with an historical sex-related conviction and sex-related crime prevention.

⁶ Generally, residency restrictions have no discernable impact on recidivism, but negatively impact families of those living with an historical sex-related offense. See Jill Levenson. "Sex Offender Residence Restrictions: Unintended Consequences and Community Reentry," 9 *Justice Research and Policy* 1 (2007)

⁷ For more information on the power of this label and its role in distorting genuine efforts to protect children, please reference my talk for TEDxCUNY, "Are We All Sex Offenders" available at <https://ajustfuture.org/are-we-all-sex-offenders-tedx-cuny-2015/>