

Vol. 8, Issue 1



## Organize for 2013

By Randy English

*Randy English is a writer for RSO Advocacy Magazine*

Another year has passed and SOSEN is still in the fight for reform. Membership is growing steadily and our forums are very active. It is no surprise really; with each new law that is passed the dragnet is pulling in more and more offenders and their families. Their lives are ultimately ruined and they seek understanding, information and hope.

2012 saw the uniting of SOSEN, RSOL and WAR to form a more united front in the fight. This was an important step towards becoming a force for change. The splintering of the movement has been our greatest weakness from the start. Now, perhaps we can come to a better understanding of what we are wanting to reform. Or perhaps the courts will beat us to the punch.

Over the past few years state supreme courts like that of Ohio and Nebraska have dealt the registry heavy blows and have shown the registry for what it is; punitive and retroactive. More state supreme courts are set to weigh in. Oklahoma is one such battle ground and we eagerly await the court's decision.

2012 also marked the year where RSOL joined with SOSEN and WAR in a national convention. It was held in New Mexico and it was a success. However as activists from across the United States ascended on the convention city they were met with opposition... if you can call it that. A very small group of uninformed people put up a small fight to keep our members from attending the convention. The disturbance soon passed and attendees found that the people in the area welcomed them. After all almost everyone knows someone on the registry and most people feel the registry is ineffective and a misconceived, expensive failure.

Law enforcement officers across the United States are voicing their opinions to us also, though off the record at this time. These people who are in the trenches (most are the officers who are doing the registering) are unhappy with a law that requires citizens (who are not breaking any laws) to be required to register; in many cases for life. They feel it is a waste of their time and taxpayer money that would be better spent tracking down people who are actually committing a crime.

On that note more studies have come in this year proving that registered sex offenders have extremely low recidivism rates. But some may ask, if that is true,

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

If this is your first time receiving this newsletter, please do not be alarmed. We want you to know that you are not alone and we are here to help you, if you need it.

We contacted you because you or someone you know is listed on the registry and we will absolutely NOT share any of your information with anyone. We want you to know that there is support for you and your family members.

If you or someone you know would like to subscribe to this newsletter, please call 1-800-773-4319 or email [lynn.gilmore13@yahoo.com](mailto:lynn.gilmore13@yahoo.com).

why is the news full of sex offender stories? Simple, sex sells. Think about it. Do they report every case of theft? No, if they did it would take up every minute they spend on the air and then some. Do they report every case of DUI/DWI? No, they don't report any for the same reasons. In fact, what do they report? Murders and sex offenses! By doing this it makes these crimes seem like they are the only crimes being committed; when in fact, these crimes are not anywhere near the top of the heap in number.

Where does this leave us? We need more organization. We need more active people in the movement. If you are one of those many who come to sites like SOSEN to read the articles, hoping and wishing that you will find news that will make your life better, remember

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that change does not happen on its own. It took someone just like you standing up and demanding change. It took people going to state capitols and pushing for or against laws that will help achieve our goals. It took people filing lawsuits. People who really do not have the money to do so, but they knew they had no choice.

How long will you sit, hope and do nothing? How long will you rely on others to fight your fight for you? You would be surprised to find out how easy and painless it is to get involved in the fight. There is so much you can do just sitting at home. Let me list but a few.

RSOL has a legal fund. If each registered sex offender in the United States gave \$1 per month, with \$9 million from just one year of donations we could win this fight in one year!

SOSEN has member's forums. Joining the forums brings you into a group of informed, determined freedom fighters. This is a place where you can learn and grow to become more active and a better, more productive communicator and educator. SOSEN also needs donation to help us print brochures that are vital in the fight.

WAR (Women Against Registry) is an organization fighting for families of registered sex offenders. They are determined to show legislators and others the real damage the registry is doing to families and children. WAR is accepting donations to help them in their education work.

These are the main groups who are fighting for reform. Join one of these groups and let your voice be heard. All of these groups offer anonymous membership so you can always feel safe and secure. But by all means get involved and become part of a force for change. ■

## **Pennsylvania Faces New Challenges to Sex Offender Laws**

*by Lynn Gilmore*

Last month, our support hotline received a surge of calls and emails from Pennsylvania residents frantic after having just receiving a letter from the state notifying them of new changes to Pennsylvania laws regarding sex offender registration. Many registrants found themselves with a new increased level status and an extension to their time being listed on the sex offender registry. Many who were expecting to be removed from the registry this or next year were suddenly being told they would now have to register for life.

Our hotline volunteers have done their best to respond to these calls and emails, passing on the information we were able to obtain from Frank, the RSOL (Reform Sex Offender Laws) affiliate in Pennsylvania.

The media has come out with numerous articles on how Pennsylvania struggles to become compliant with the Adam Walsh Act. In a December 25, 2012 article by the Public Opinion Online (<http://goo.gl/4vyBX>) our affiliate Brenda Jones, executive director of Reform Sex Offender Laws, Inc. is quoted as saying, "It is disappointing that Pennsylvania's lawmakers chose to ignore the lessons learned when Ohio proceeded down this same disastrous path more than five years ago." Ohio's supreme court had found many of the conditions of the law to be unconstitutional and many of the new restrictions placed on registered sex offenders wound up having to be reversed.

The article states: "Pennsylvania's new law will 'transform what is supposed to be a non-punitive, civil regulatory measure into a form of (unconstitutional) lifetime probationary supervision for most

persons on the registry,' Jones said. 'And further, all individuals on Pennsylvania's registry will see their registration periods dramatically increase, with the majority becoming life-timers. This is a violation of the ex post facto clause.'"

In another article dated December 20, 2012 by the Juvenile Law Center (<http://goo.gl/vpMNM>), the article puts it bluntly: "Pennsylvania took a giant step backward" enacting Act 111, which includes juveniles among those that will be listed on the sex offender registry for life. "The law does little to improve public safety and ignores Supreme Court jurisprudence on treating juveniles differently," and "Over 92% of all individuals who committed a sex offense as a juvenile do not commit another sex offense. Kids tend to mature out of sexual offending behavior and are not likely to commit another sexual offense".

RSOL is planning to fight these new laws and is working with the Pennsylvania affiliate, Frank. Anyone wishing to help, please contact Frank at [reformpennsylvanialaws@yahoo.com](mailto:reformpennsylvanialaws@yahoo.com). If you do not have access to a computer or email, please call our hotline at 800-773-4319 to request that Frank return your call.

We have been informed that in order to win this fight, the group will need donations of at least \$50.00 in order to make a difference, but please, even if you only have a few dollars, please do not hesitate to donate what you can. Each donation should be made payable directly to the attorney (listed below) with "Fight the AWA Act" on the memo section of the check. He will be filing the complaint towards the end of January. It will affect every offender in the state if he is successful.

The attorney info:

Weisberg Law, P.C.  
also t/a Consumer Justice Alliance  
7 S. Morton Ave.  
Morton, PA 19070



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W: 610-690-0801

C: 215-370-7500

F: 610-690-0880

[www.weisberglawoffices.com](http://www.weisberglawoffices.com)

It is also recommended that you contact the ACLU and file a formal complaint. We have included the info below. You need to contact the office nearest to you.

#### Eastern Office

PO Box 40008

Philadelphia, PA 19106

T: 215-592-1513 or toll-free at

877-PHL-ACLU

F: 215-592-1343

[info@aclupa.org](mailto:info@aclupa.org)

#### Western Office

313 Atwood Street

Pittsburgh, PA 15213

T: 412-681-7736 or toll-free at

877-PGH-ACLU

[pghinfo@aclupa.org](mailto:pghinfo@aclupa.org)

#### Central Office

PO Box 11761

Harrisburg, PA 17108

T: 717-238-2258

[hbginfo@aclupa.org](mailto:hbginfo@aclupa.org) ■

## New York Creates Gun Owner's Registry

by Lynn Gilmore

After the recent mass shooting at a Connecticut elementary school, gun laws in the U.S. have again become the hot topic of today.

Regardless of what side of the fence you are on, I am sure everyone can agree that a public registry showing every registered gun owner is a *very* bad idea, but that is just what the New York Journal News has done. Looking at the map, I see *thousands* of red dots concentrated in a small area and I can't help but to worry for the safety of these people who suddenly find themselves on this list. I also realize, that at the rate we're going, someday the sex offender registry will be *just as* concentrated, and where will the world be then? ■

## ONLINE RESOURCES AND LINKS

National & State Support Forums

[www.sosen.org](http://www.sosen.org)

Sex offender research: issues, news and recidivism

[www.sexoffenderresearch.blogspot.com](http://www.sexoffenderresearch.blogspot.com)

A "one stop shop" for everything related to sex offenders

[www.sexoffenderissues.blogspot.com](http://www.sexoffenderissues.blogspot.com)

A comprehensive legal resource site for offenders and their families

[www.oncefallen.com](http://www.oncefallen.com)

Contact your state affiliate on local issues

<http://nationalrsol.org/affiliates>

A research site containing many valuable research articles on sex offenders

<http://www.solresearch.org>

Support Hotline: support and resources for registrants and their families

[www.thesupporthotline.org](http://www.thesupporthotline.org)

Women Against Registry

<http://www.womenagainstry.com>

USA Fair

<http://www.usafair.org>

Don't Talk to Cops- Part 1

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8z7NC5sgik>

Don't Talk to Cops- Part 2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08fZQWjDVKE>

A support forum for those with loved ones incarcerated

[www.prisonatalk.com](http://www.prisonatalk.com)

Stop It Now-working to prevent child sexual abuse

[www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org)

## We Need Your Help!

SOSEN is an all-volunteer organization; we do not have any paid staff.

All donations go directly to our cause.

We are also tax exempt; all contributions may be tax deductible.

### HOW CAN I HELP?

Please keep me informed:

(Optional & Anonymous)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \$5    ☐ \$10    ☐ \$20

☐ \$100    ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please specify what donation is designated for, if any:*

Please send all contributions to: **SOSEN, PO box 235, Dixon, IL 61021**

You may also send your donations via Paypal to us at:

[sosentreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:sosentreasurer@gmail.com)

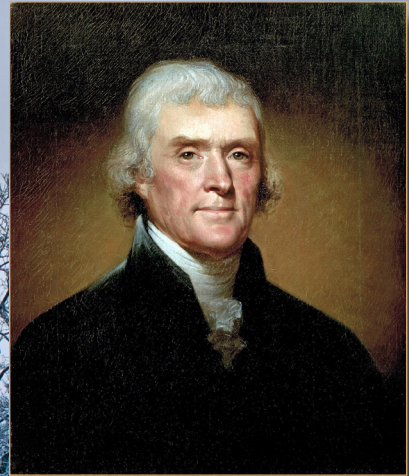
*Please mark your donation as "gift" on your Paypal donation.*

Thank you for your support, any contributions provided to our struggle is greatly appreciated and helps us a long way.

*Anonymous Donations Accepted*

*If* a law is unjust, a man is not only right  
to disobey it, he is obligated to do so.

~Thomas Jefferson



**SOSEN**

IS WORKING TO MAINTAIN THE CONSTITUTIONAL  
RIGHTS FOR ALL OF OUR CITIZENS



PLACE  
POSTAGE  
HERE