

Anti-Registry Movement of Oregon

Recidivism Studies

Various studies conducted over the years have found a consistently low number of sex offenders who re-offend. In light of the consistency of research, it would be hard-pressed to explain away why so many studies have come to the same consistent conclusion.

US Department of Justice, "Recidivism of Sex Offenders Released into the Community in 1994."

- Three-year follow-up period
- 9,641 sex offenders released in 15 states
- 262,420 non-sex offenders released in same 15 states in 1994
- 517 sex offenders (5.3% of all sex offenders) were arrested for a sex crime within 3 years
- 3,228 non-sex offenders (1.3% of all no-sex offenders) were arrested for a sex crime within the same three year period
- 3.5% of sex offenders re-convicted

Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, "Ten Year Recidivism Follow-up of 1989 Sex Offender Releases."

- 8% of sex offenders were recommitted in the 10-year period
- 3% of sex offenders committed a sexually-related violation of probation/ parole
- Half of recidivists re-offended within two years of release
- 2/3 of recidivists re-offended within 3 years of release
- Treatment found to reduce recidivism (16.7% w/o treatment, 7% w/ treatment)

Michigan DOC Parole Board Stats for parolees 1990-2000 (3 year follow-up)

- 4762 SO paroled, 993 total failures, 702 technical violations, 291 returned to prison, 117 committed sex crimes (2.46%), 6.11% total recidivism (apparently based on return to prison)
- Lowest total (general) recidivism: Homicide (6.03%), Sex Offenders (6.11%), Embezzlement (8.44%), Arson (8.64%), Motor Vehicle Offenses (10.75%)
- Lowest same crime (specific) recidivism: Embezzlement (0.44%), Murder (0.99%), Arson (1.49%), Sex Offenses (2.46%), Assault (2.83%)

Sex Offender Sentencing In Washington State: Recidivism Rates (5 year + 1 year for adjudication, based on conviction rates)

- General SO Recidivism 13%; Sex Offense Recidivism 2.7%; among child victim offenders, 2.3%; among rapists, 3.9%

Arizona Dept. of Corrections follow up of SO released from 1984-1998 (up to 12 year follow-up period)

- 3,205 released SO; 25.2% general recidivism; 5.5% sex crime; Indecency SO recidivists, 9.3%; Rapists, 5.9%; sex abuse 5%; sex conduct with minor, 3.5%

Arizona Three year study (2009) AZ Criminal Justice Commission

- Rearrest for a new sex crime within three years Of the 290 released sex offenders, 2.4% were rearrested for a new sex crime. By comparison, sex offenders were nearly six times more likely to be rearrested for a new sex crime than non-sex offenders. Among a sample of non-sex offenders, 0.4% (six out of 1,699) were rearrested for a new sex crime.

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Utah Sentencing Commission/ Larry Bench study (2007) 25-year follow-up

- Bench, also a University of Utah criminology professor, conducted what he calls one of the most comprehensive studies on convicted sex offenders. In the study of 389 Utah prison inmates tracked as far back as 25 years, he found 7.2 percent were convicted of new sex crimes.

Minnesota Recidivism study (2007) Minn. Dept. of Corrections

- Sex Offense Recidivism
 - After three years, seven percent of the 3,166 offenders had been rearrested for a sex offense, six percent reconvicted, and three percent reincarcerated.
 - By the end of the follow-up period (an average of 8.4 years for all 3,166 offenders), 12 percent had been rearrested for a sex offense, 10 percent reconvicted, and seven percent reincarcerated.
 - Prior sex crimes, stranger victims, male child victims (i.e. male victims under the age of 13), failure in prison-based sex offender treatment, and a metro-area county of commitment each significantly increased the risk of timing to a sex reoffense.¹
 - Intensive supervised release (ISR), supervised release, supervised release revocations, and successful participation/completion of sex offender treatment each significantly reduced the risk of timing to a sex reoffense.

Alaska three year recidivism study (2007) Alaska Judicial Council

- 3% of the persons who were convicted of a Sexual offense in a 1999 case had at least one new Sexual conviction.
- Sexual offenders were the group least likely to be convicted of the same type of offense that they were convicted of in the 1999 sample.
- Driving offenders were eight times more likely to have a new Driving conviction than Sexual offenders were likely to have a new Sexual conviction.
- SO specific recidivism rate, 3%; SO arrested for any crime (gen. recid.) 39%; All criminals general recidivism, 60%. Factors correlated with higher recidivism: Youth, substance abuse, mental illness, poor

Harris and Hanson (2004) Summary of Canadian Recidivism studies (averaged percentages of recidivists after 5, 10, and 15 years respectively)

- All Sex offenders - 14%, 20%, 24%
- Rapists- 14%, 21%, 24%
- Incest Molesters - 6%, 9%, 13%
- Girl Victim Molesters - 9%, 13%, 16%
- Boy victim molesters - 23%, 28%, 35%
- First time sex offenders - 10%, 15%, 19%
- Repeat sex offenders - 25%, 32%, 37%

California study: Recidivism of Paroled Sex Offenders, 10 year study 1997 to 2007 (2008) California Sex Offender Management Board

- Recidivism after 1 year of release: 2.21%
- Recidivism after 2 years of release: 2.94%
- Recidivism after 5 years of release: 3.3%
- Recidivism after 10 years of release: 3.38%
- NOTEWORTHY FINDINGS: The total of sexual recidivists is lower than some might have believed. Most re-offenses and parole violations occur in the initial period of reentry after release. Sex offenders are more likely to commit some other type of offense than to commit a new sex offense.

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Indiana Three Year Recidivism Rate 2005-2007 (2009) Indiana Department of Corrections

- The percentage of identified sex offenders that return to incarceration within three years of their release, for a new identified sex offense, remains comparatively consistent over all three years. The graph below shows that slightly more than 5% of all identified sex offenders who return to the Indiana Department of Correction, do so for the conviction of a new sex offense.
- 2005: 5.3%, 2006: 5.2%, 2007: 5.7%
- A follow-up of Indiana sex offense re-conviction rates for sex offenders in 2009 was reported as 1.03%, the lowest in the USA.

New York recidivism study (2009) NY Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)

- Sex offense recidivism rate after 1 year: 2%; 2 years: 3%; 5 years: 6%; 8 years: 8%

Orchowski and Iwama study (2009) Justice Research and Statistics Association

- Three year recidivism rates by state: Alaska 3.4%, Arizona 2.3%, Delaware 3.8%, Illinois 2.4%, Iowa 3.9%, New Mexico 1.8%, South Carolina 4.0%, and Utah 9.0%.

Maine 3 Year Recidivism Study (2010) USM Muskie School of Public Service

- Sex crime rearrest rate of registrants within 3 years: 3.9% (22 registrants)
- Arrests of non-registrants for sex crimes: 0.6% (66)

Connecticut 5 year Recidivism Study (2012)

- In 2005, 746 offenders who had served a prison sentence for a least one sex-related offense were released or discharged from prison. Over the next five years:
 - 27 (3.6%) of these men were arrested and charged with a new sex crime.
 - 20 (2.7%) were convicted for new sex offense, and
 - 13 (1.7%) were returned to prison to serve a sentence for a new sex crime.

Conclusion

The simple question of recidivism has a rather complex answer. However, the general consensus is our worst fear, namely the number of sex offenders committing new sex crimes, is much lower than believed. Still, the recidivism myth runs deep and proponents of sex offender legislation have given many excuses regarding the consistently low numbers of sex specific recidivism. Some claim sex offenders “learn not to get caught again” (Hopkins 2007), others look at the concept of unreported crimes, misread and misinform the public on research findings (whether intentional or not), or simply reject the findings altogether. Regardless of the criticism, the fact remains that sex offenders have a low recidivism rate, are less likely to commit crimes than other offenders, vary greatly by offense type, are less likely to re-offend the longer they are out of prison, and make up only a fraction of sex crime arrests. As long as the recidivism myth remains, there is little hope for progress in addressing the root causes of criminal sexual behavior.

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