



The New York State Alliance of Sex Offender Service Providers

P.O. Box 6815
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Position in Support of Assembly Bill 09258

June 5, 2012

The New York State Alliance of Sex Offender Service Providers is a not-for-profit professional education and support organization comprised of probation and parole officers, mental health professionals, corrections personnel, victim advocates, law enforcement officers, and sex offense treatment providers. Our members work to enhance community safety by improving the investigation, prosecution, community supervision, treatment, and community re-entry for sex offenders using a victim-centered model.

Our organization is in strong support of Assembly Bill 09258, which would amend NYS corrections law in relation to risk assessment instruments used to assign risk level for registered sex offenders in New York State.

The current risk assessment guidelines for New York State's Sex Offender Registration Act (SORA) were created in 1995 and adopted for use in 1996. Since that time the guidelines have undergone almost no modification, and until very recently the current New York State risk assessment instrument had not been tested regarding its predictive validity. Although a recent study (Sandler, 2012) did demonstrate the instrument has modest utility in predicting sexual risk, the same study showed the predictive accuracy could be greatly improved by using risk factors that have been identified in the sex offense recidivism research conducted since the current instrument's creation. Furthermore, the same study indicated the current instrument does not measure risk of harm, but the more recently identified risk factors do.

The proposed bill would update New York State's process of assigning risk to registered sex offenders, requiring that current, validated assessment tools (such as the Static-99) and research supported risk factors be used in the determination and assignment of an individual's risk level, and that the process remain current through periodic reviews and updates.

An improved risk assignment process regarding identified offenders would offer many benefits, including improved public safety. High risk offenders would be more accurately identified, which would allow more intensive monitoring and treatment services to be directed to the cases in greatest need. This would in turn provide cost benefits, as already scarce resources could be more effectively distributed and targeted.

