**THE NEED FOR SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY REFORM**

(adapted from “Grand Challenges: Social Justice and the Need for Evidence-Based Sex Offender Registry Reform” by Jill S. Levenson, Melissa D. Grady, and George S. Leibowitz, in *The* *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, ResearchGate, January 2016)

Excerpts from the above-mentioned study:

 The world's leading researchers on sex offender risk and recidivism rates have been conducting longitudinal research for over two decades and have developed, refined, and validated actuarial risk assessment tools (such as the Static-99-R) that demonstrate predictive ability to screen offenders into relative risk categories (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009; Hanson & Thornton, 1999; Hanson, Thornton, Helmus, & Babchishin, 2015; Helmus et al., 2012). We now have reliable data about the long-term recidivism outcomes of sex offenders who have been assessed at different levels of risk, and these data are enormously helpful in formulating policy decisions.

 Lifetime registration requirements contribute to an inefficient distribution of resources with perhaps little benefit to community safety, and they contradict research indicating that risk declines with age for all criminals and that sex offense recidivism is especially rare with advanced age (Hanson, 2002; Helmus, Thornton, Hanson, & Babchishin, 2011; Thornton, 2006).

 These data provide persuasive guiding principles for registration duration policies. Classification procedures should utilize validated risk assessment tools and consider risk factors empirically associated with recidivism. For lower and moderate risk offenders, 10 years duration provides sufficient time to demonstrate their post-conviction patterns of recidivism. Lifetime registration carries with it an implication that individuals are beyond redemption, and therefore, if used, should be reserved for repeat offenders.