Dear Sheriff ,

Florida law already requires people on the sex offense registry to live further than 1,000 feet from the outer boundaries of all schools, parks, playgrounds, and day care centers. The Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) 2018 Report stated: “As of November 2018, there were 166 local residence restrictions in 48 Florida counties, including 29 county and 137 municipal ordinances.” Since the release of this report, there are now more counties that have passed ordinances to extend the residency restrictions. These additional restrictions, which go above the state’s restrictions of 1,000 feet, can go up to 2,500 feet with some counties and municipalities going beyond schools, park, playgrounds, and day care centers to include designated public school bus stops, public libraries, churches, zoos, public beaches, and any place where children can congregate.

In hoping that the different sheriffs’ offices throughout Florida can initiate the much-needed conversation on the ineffectiveness of residency restrictions that various counties and municipalities in Florida have imposed on the thousands of people in Florida with a past sex offense but who are now law-abiding citizens, the following are just two of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of residency restrictions as reported in my most recent letter to you:

1. Approximately 93% of minors know their perpetrator, thereby debunking the stranger-danger myth. The offenders are most often family members, school or church staff, etc., and are often juveniles themselves. Many of these future offenders, who are known by the minor, live within the state’s 1,000-foot residency-restricted areas along with the county/municipality extended distances. Therefore, there are future sex offenders currently living close to schools, playgrounds, etc., while there are sexually non-reoffending people on the registry who are forced into homelessness because of the residency restrictions. Forcing sexually non-reoffending registrants into homelessness is not making society safer. All released inmates need a place to live, a job, and family/community support to be able to reintegrate back into society safely as law-abiding citizens.
2. At least 90% of future sex crimes will be committed by people NOT on the registry. Many of these people, too, live within the residency-restricted areas. Law enforcement is monitoring thousands of Florida registrants who are not sexually re-offending while this future 90% can live anywhere with nothing being done to prevent their future sex crimes.

September 15, 2020, a letter was sent from the Palm Beach County Justice Services Public Safety Department in West Palm Beach, the Broward County Reentry Coalition, and the South Florida Reentry Task Force in the Miami-Date area, to the Florida Senate and House of Representatives in Tallahassee. It was stated in the letter: “While it may seem like common sense to implement a plan to exclude people who have a history of sexual offending from an area around schools and parks, SORRs (Sex Offender Residency Restrictions) only prevent where registrants can reside at night (between 10PM and 6AM), not where they can go during the day. Common sense also suggests that children are at home sleeping between 10PM and 6AM, not in libraries or playgrounds.”

I have enclosed some of the research showing the ineffectiveness of residency restrictions. I am unable to enclose research on the effectiveness of residency restrictions as I can find no such research.

Sincerely,