



**Florida Action Committee, Inc.**  
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August 3, 2018

Sheriff Scott J. Israel  
Broward County Sheriff  
2601 West Broward Boulevard  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312

Dear Sheriff Israel:

I am president of the Florida Action Committee (FAC). FAC is a not-for-profit public safety advocacy organization. Our membership of over 1000 individuals is comprised of your constituents and citizens of Florida in other counties.

On August 25, 2009, the Broward County Sexual Offender & Sexual Predator Residence Task Force prepared a Final Report to the Board of County Commissioners and County Administrators. (a copy of this report has been enclosed for your reference). The report made a number of recommendations based on then-existing criminal justice research and best practices of sex offender management.

The purpose of the report was to address the housing crisis that had emerged from the enactment of Sex Offender Residency Restrictions (SORRs) in Broward County and its cities. As the Report stated, *“Despite their best intentions, these laws have resulted in an array of unintended consequences.”*

Today, 9 years after the submission of this report, things have only worsened! Twenty-seven percent (27%) of Broward County’s sex offender population is transient. That’s more than 300 individuals forced to live on the streets because they are unable to find housing and are ineligible for homeless shelters.

Because Broward has taken no action to implement its own Task Force’s recommended changes, the problem has only worsened. What has also not changed during this time is the research. In fact, even more data has become available and more studies have disproved the effectiveness of SORRs. It is now well established that they do nothing to improve public safety.

Despite their ineffectiveness and the fact that they do more harm than good, we believe SORRs persist for two reasons; public misconception and political risk in light of that misconception.

The public misconception is that “sex offenders” are a homogenous group of incorrigible, predatory child molesters who are constantly looking for children to snatch off a playground. In Broward, this misconception is, in large part, perpetuated by individuals such as Ron and Sen. Lauren Book. Ron is a Lobbyist for private corrections contractors Geo Group and CCA and Lauren is head of Lauren’s Kids. Their organizations have a direct financial benefit from the perpetuation of these misconceptions.

Sheriff, you and I are both parents of sons who have been accused of a sexual offense. My son was convicted of downloading files containing child pornography. His was a one-time, non-contact offense that happened when he was 21 years old and searched for something unknowing that it would yield illegal material. While not intending to excuse what our sons might have done, a single misstep in an otherwise flawless life should not forever banish an individual from their community, prevent them from maintaining gainful employment or preclude them from eventually parenting their own children. Unfortunately, for my son, and our family that has been the case thus far and the irreparable harm has no bounds and no end.

It frustrates this organization tremendously that politicians have known, for some time already, that current policies for the management of people designated as “sex offenders” is not only misguided, but dangerously counter-productive. Yet, despite this knowledge, no politicians have had the will to fix things, even though it negatively impacts public safety.

Broward still has a Sex Offender Housing Task Force. I implore you to meet with them and reconsider implementing their recommendations. Not only because they may one day impact your family, but because it will make Broward County safer.

Sincerely,

s/

Gail Colletta, President  
The Florida Action Committee, Inc.