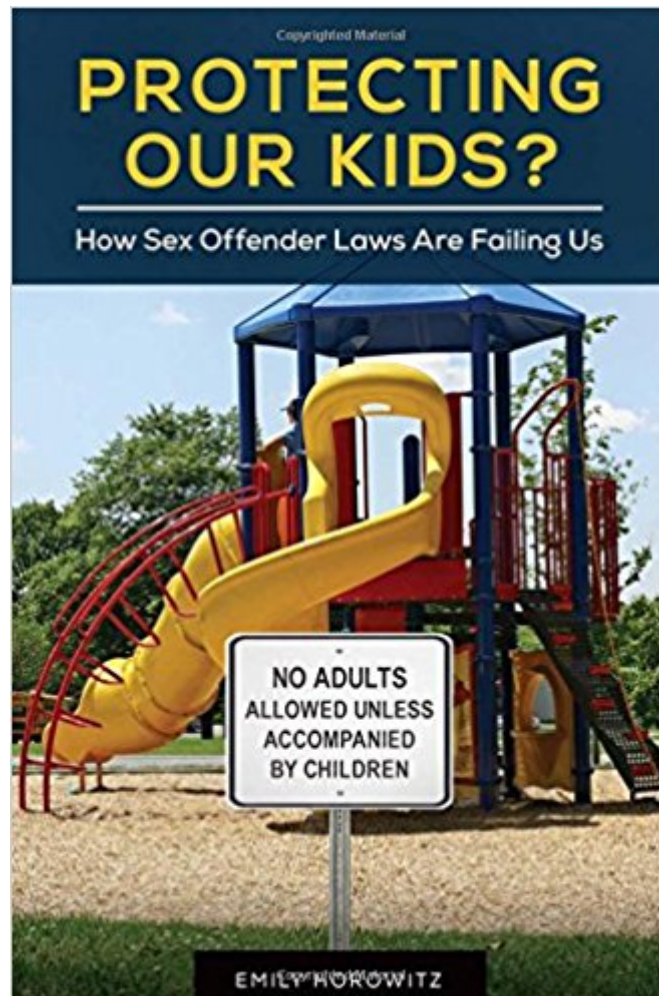




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Protecting Our Kids?: How Sex Offender Laws Are Failing Us



Synopsis

This thought-provoking work raises important questions about sex offender laws, drawing from personal stories, research, and data to prove the policies promote fear, destroy lives, and fail to protect children.

- Provides research-based evidence that the mean-spirited and panic-driven sex offender laws, aimed at branding a group of offenders as inhuman and unworthy of civil liberties and human rights, increases fear, destroys the lives of offenders and their families, and fails to protect children
- Shows that emphasizing sex offenders and stranger-danger as the primary threat to child well-being and safety prevents focus on and attention to policies that prevent far more pervasive forms of child abuse, such as physical abuse, neglect, and maltreatment
- Analyzes the sociohistorical context surrounding the emergence of current draconian sex offender policies
- Challenges the idea that sex offenders must be continually monitored and publicly identified
- Tells the stories of convicted sex offenders and their families and how they survive in a society that views them as the "worst of the worst"

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The author should be applauded for her brave, well-researched stance. A highly readable book for criminal justice and social science collections. Summing Up: Essential. All levels/libraries." - Choice

"In this masterful account of sex crimes and sex offender legislation, Professor Horowitz elegantly mixes the stories of those convicted of sex offenses with clear-eyed social analysis. Professor Horowitz argues that too many sex offenders are caught in a tangled web consisting of personal

and social pathologies that sex offender registries make worse. Over six chapters, Professor Horowitz carefully examines and explains the hysteria, the myths, and the sense of moral panic that surrounds sex offenders. In tackling such a complicated and contentious topic, Professor Horowitz demonstrates that it is possible to write a book suitable for both academics and those genuinely interested in the vexing problem of sex offenders."

— Cary Federman, Associate Professor, Department of Justice Studies, Montclair State University "My heart pounded as I read this book, it is that thrilling to see truth in print. In our admirable urge to protect our children, we have chosen the most destructive, least effective path possible—the path from concern straight to hysteria and cruelty. With Horowitz as our brilliant guide, we see how we got here and why we must turn back, for the sake of justice and our own precious kids."

— Lenore Skenazy, founder of the book and blog Free-Range Kids "Dr. Horowitz makes a persuasive case for why the current rash of draconian sex offender laws in the United States violate civil liberties, create an entire class of pariahs and outcasts, and above all, fail to protect children. Her interviews with offenders bring reality, insight, and clarity to a subject usually blurred by panic and hysteria. She compellingly shows that portrayals of offenders as predatory, incurable monsters do not advance our understanding—and no matter how politically popular a set of laws might be, popularity does not translate into effectiveness. Dr. Horowitz approaches this topic as no one else has: realistically rather than sensationalistically."

— Gavin de Becker, bestselling author of The Gift of Fear

Great book. Every single time I hear a politician say the phrase, "we must protect our children," I cringe. We know our lawmakers to be less than truthful and surely not worthy of blind trust. So, why do we keep getting duped by supporting these people when they use this platform? I guess I could understand if theirs was a heinous, heinous crime that happened to their little one, but it almost always seems to be a platform pandering to the lowest common denominator. They say the first person through a brick wall is the bloodiest. But, once the hole has been made, it gets easier for other to go through. I'm honestly very impressed with the author, as well as the professors and doctors that are brave enough to say the most common sense thing that we all seem to think. Good for them! One caveat. I do think the most heinous of perpetrators need to have the most heinous of punishments. Completely. By and large, though, I bet I've known of at least 20 people on the registry and they are all as normal as you could imagine and not guilty of the most heinous crimes. An isolated instance that they were actually accepting of a very real consequence... but for the rest of their lives? Give me a break. Give a real punishment and let everyone get on with their lives. At this rate we'll be able to throw a rock in any direction and hit a registered offender.

Had to get the book as my brother was the one that received the 100 year sentence for allegedly possessing child pornography. Although there was substantial evidence for his innocence (one fact was according to the download times, my brother wasn't even in his apartment, he wasn't even in the city..his ex-girlfriend was. Part of the time that the child pornography was download, my brother was in a tent in a remote part of West South Dakota during the Sturgis Rally....and has receipts to prove it). Evidence that would have shown innocence (and there was a lot) was not allowed to be presented. A majority of the jurors that day gave a guilty verdict based on the "just in case" mindset that appears in the book. I hold no bad feelings for these jurors as they did not know that my brother would receive 100 years. In the state of South Dakota most people that commit this crime get three months or less. This author does an excellent job of showing the fear mongering that surrounds these cases and often results in an unjust trial. No one wants to be the person that appears to stand up for any form of child sex crimes. With this it means many Innocent and even those that are guilty can not get a fair trial as the steamroller of justice ignores facts and evidence and convicts on the premise of "just in case."Corey Bruce USMC/Disabled Vet/Registered Nurse.

"Protecting Our Kids?" is an excellent study of public hysteria that shows how sex-offender laws are meant to make people feel good rather than deal with a problem. When someone can be thrown into jail for six months for having sex with a consenting 16-3/4-year-old, and then be blacklisted for eight years after serving his sentence, things need fixing. The author backs up her thesis with research and sensible arguments that in no way whitewash those guilty of heinous crimes. Since, as Horowitz shows, the vast majority of abuse is committed by those in the nearest circle of friends and relatives, the obsession with "stranger danger" is counterproductive. We see how resources poured into post-incarceration registries and questionable therapies could be far better employed to protect our kids from far more prevalent forms of abuse and want.

While there will always be those sex offenders who need to have an eye kept on them and whom people should be worried about, there are a greater number who don't need extra punishment after they've been rehabilitated. The current system does nothing to help them become part of society as it is meant to do, and this book illustrates how harshly their lives and those who are attached to them continue to be affected. This book illustrates perfectly why the system needs to be changed, both for the sake of those who have paid their reparations to society and their victims and to do away with the social paranoia that is generated because of the sex offender Witch Hunt.

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