


PRESIDENT

Kristen Mahoney†
Executive Director
Maryland Governor's Office
of Crime Control & Prevention

January 21, 2012

VICE PRESIDENT

Jack Cutrone†
Executive Director
IL Criminal Justice Information Authority

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
2409 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers
Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Roland Menaf†
Montana

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Cabell C. Cropper†

Dear Congressmen Smith and Conyers:

BOARD MEMBERS

John A. Blackburn, Jr.†
Executive Director
Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

I write on behalf of the members of the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) who are the chief executive officers of the state and territorial criminal justice planning agencies. In this role they administer the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) program. While NCJA member agencies are not responsible for compliance with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA), they have a direct role and interest in implementation. First and foremost, our members strongly support the intent of the bill in protecting our children and communities from sexual predators. NCJA members are also involved since the penalty for non-compliance with SORNA is the withholding of 10 percent of a state's Byrne JAG award. Byrne JAG is the cornerstone federal criminal justice grant program, allowing the federal government to support innovative, evidence-based approaches to preventing and fighting crime in states nationwide.

Robert P. Boehmer†
Director
Institute for Public Safety Partnerships
University of Illinois at Chicago

Gwendolyn Burrell
Executive Director
NC Governor's Crime Commission

Fran Ecker
Virginia

Kriste Kibbey Etue
Director
MI Department of State Police
Grants Section

Most states and territories are working diligently to come into compliance with SORNA. To date, 15 states, two territories and 22 tribes have been found to be in substantial compliance. We anticipate as many as 10-15 more states could come into compliance over the next year. Given that the SMART Office's supplemental guidelines for implementation were released only 12 months ago, this is a record of which the states can be proud.

Burke O. Fitzpatrick†
Administrator
Office of Justice Programs
SC Department of Public Safety

Christian Kervick†
Director of Programming
Delaware Criminal Justice Council

Many states not yet in compliance have identified four primary remaining barriers to implementation:

Michael Lawlor
Under Secretary
Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division
CT Office of Policy & Management

Mary Marshall
Public Information Officer
Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Ed Parker
Deputy Director of Operations
MD Governor's Office of Crime
Control & Prevention

Jeanne Smith
Director
Division of Criminal Justice
CO Department of Public Safety

1. the frequency with which offenders must register in-person with their registering authority;
2. the length of time juvenile offenders must remain on the registry before allowed to seek judicial review;
3. the offender information which must be disclosed to the public; and,
4. the lack of flexibility in classification.

David O. Steingraber
Wisconsin

John Sweeney
Chief Deputy
Oneida County Sheriff's Office

Furthermore, NCJA members believe the statute should provide the Attorney General with flexibility in applying the penalty based on a state's compliance status. Also, NCJA members believe that tribes in PL 280 states should have the opportunity to be registration jurisdictions.

We understand that the House Judiciary Committee is scheduled to consider a bill to reauthorize the Adam Walsh Act on Tuesday, January 24. We respectfully request that the Committee consider providing additional flexibility in the areas outlined above which, taken together, can move the majority of remaining states into substantial compliance with SORNA while at the same time maintaining the highest level of public safety.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cabell Cropper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Cabell Cropper
Executive Director

cc:

Rep. James Sensenbrenner, Chair, Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security Subcommittee
Rep. Bobby Scott, Ranking member, Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security Subcommittee
Members of the House Judiciary Committee