

April 3, 2007

Judiciary Committee Members
Connecticut General Assembly
State Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I live in a suburban residential development in Columbia. My block alone is home to nearly 60 children of varying ages. While I have no idea how many children live in the entire development, I would guess they number well over 100.

This past fall, I discovered one of our close neighbors is listed as a convicted sex offender on the Florida sex offender Web site, with an offense related to a child under 16 years of age. When I searched for my neighbor on the Connecticut sex offender registry, he was not listed. By speaking with officials in Florida, I learned that my neighbor was charged and convicted of sexual battery on a child 11 years old or younger – turns out she was 7 and the act was described by his probation officer as “vulgar.”

For two years he has been living in my neighborhood, walking his dogs and talking to our children and the parents here had no idea of his background. Many parents regularly check the Connecticut sex offender registry and take note of offenders living in their local community. We rely upon this Web site as a resource to help keep our children safe.

To find out why my neighbor was absent from the Connecticut Sex Offender Registry, I spoke with Sgt. Sam Izzarelli with the Department of Public Safety. He informed me that this predator’s “adjudication withheld” status in Florida does not qualify him as a convicted sex offender under existing Connecticut law. Sgt. Izzarelli explained that “our hands are tied” and that nothing will change this loophole unless our laws regarding out-of-state convictions are broadened. He also stated that many sex offenders know of this loophole and choose to live in our state because, more than likely, they will not be listed on our site.

I am writing to ask that you pass House Bill 7408 so that convicted sex offenders from other states will not be able to live among us in Connecticut without appearing on our state’s sex offender registry. What good is this resource if only a percentage of those convicted in other states are considered sex offenders by Connecticut law and listed on our registry?

There is a for sale sign in front of my neighbor’s house at this time. I wonder where he will move next and if the families in that town/neighborhood will know of his past?

P.S.
Columbia, Connecticut