

FACT SHEET

Notification to Victims of Sexually Violent Predators

Title I of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 established the federal Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act, or SORNA. SORNA provides a comprehensive set of minimum standards for sex offender registration and notification in the United States.

One of the goals of the federal Adam Walsh Act, and of SORNA in particular, was to address the inconsistency across the various state Megan's Law registries and to create a uniform standard for sex offender registry requirements. To achieve this goal, the federal Adam Walsh Act required the states to implement legislation that was in substantial compliance with the sex offender registry requirements set forth in SORNA.

Pennsylvania passed the Adam Walsh Bill on December 20, 2011, bringing it into compliance with the federal Adam Walsh Act.

Pennsylvania's Adam Walsh Law, which amends and effectively replaces the Commonwealth's "Megan's Law" statute, gives the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) the primary responsibility for the administration of the law and for maintaining the central repository of all sex offender registration and compliance records. PSP retained the commonly known Megan's Law title for its sex offender registry website.

Following a conviction, but before sentencing, the court must order a person convicted of an Adam Walsh Law offense to undergo an assessment by the Sexual Offenders Assessment Board. Upon receipt of the assessment, the prosecutor determines if a hearing is to be held to determine the offender's status as a Sexually Violent Predator (SVP).

The Adam Walsh Law requires the PSP to make notifications to crime victims upon an offender's registration as an SVP, change of residence or becomes homeless/transient.

- The notice shall contain the SVPs name and address where he resides or is homeless or transient.
- The victim may terminate the notification by contacting the local police or PSP in writing. The victim can reinstate the duty to notify in writing to the PSP Megan's Law Section.

The mission of the Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) is to ensure victims are aware of their rights and services, including ongoing services after sentencing. Therefore, it makes sense for the OVA to work in partnership with the PSP to make these notifications.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the PSP has allowed the OVA to use the PA Sex Offender Registry Tool (PA SORT) to notify victims of an SVP and to reach out to victims in a victim-centered continuum of service throughout the post-sentencing process.

Where an individual is not determined to be an SVP by a court, the victim will be notified in accordance with the Crime Victim's Act. Local victim/witness coordinators register victims of county-sentenced offenders; and they assist with OVA registration for state-sentenced offenders.



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