

Thank you for your time and consideration of this vitally important matter.

As a father, imagine the shock when I heard that a dance put on by the elementary school two of my children attend was also attended by a known pedophile – a convicted child pornographer who was caught collecting and sharing sexual content of children from ages 1 to 14. This man was caught, tried, convicted, and served 7 years in a federal prison, and upon release was required to spend another 7 years under supervision of the state. This man, who is not a guardian – just a boyfriend, was allowed into a school dance filled with children of his preferred age, and was found by parents to be recording children. I was utterly shocked and floored that this man had somehow gotten access to the children in our community.

I was even more shocked, when I found out that this man had been allowed to be there by the principal of our school. How could this be? Aren't there laws to protect our most vulnerable population from predators like this? My immediate reaction was to find out what laws this man had broken, so that I could make sure that our community didn't have to deal with this happening again. If I thought I was shocked before, it didn't compare at all to the shock I had when I found out that Kansas has no laws to protect our children from people like this. Coming from a state that prevented sex offenders from being within 1,000 ft of a school zone, I had assumed that ALL states would have at least SOME version of this common sense rule.

As outraged, enraged, frustrated, and disgusted as I felt, I know it's not a stretch for people to put themselves in my shoes emotionally. But I also understand that it's the job of lawmakers to look at their proposed laws from all angles and consider all of their constituents. It is really easy to demonize a sex offender and I feel like we need more than emotional outrage to make a decision about this. As an engineer, I know the importance of making decisions based on data, not just feelings.

In light of this, I wanted to add in some data and studies that support the idea that people who have been convicted of sex crimes against children should not be allowed to be around children. In a study of 197 child molesters released from prison, 42% were caught and reconvicted. This reoffense occurred as soon as right away, or as long as 31 years after the offender had been released back into society. This doesn't even account for the number of offenders that were never caught for their reoffences. These studies define reoffense as being convicted again for their crimes, and there is evidence to suggest that actual rates of reoffense could be as high as 80%.

There are also studies that compare pedophiles to opium addicts. It has been demonstrated that pedophilia is correlated psychologically to drug and other sexual addictions. The implication here is that it's not just in the best interest of children, but the sex offender themselves, to impose this distance. When addicts are repeatedly exposed to their drug, they are far more likely to relapse, or in this case reoffend. This same study shows high levels of psychopathy, sociopathy, and manipulative behavior in pedophiles. These character traits are the very reason why we should not leave their presence around children up to one or two school district employees to decide. Educators are there to educate, not determine if someone is a danger to children.

All of this data suggests that this is not a harmless crime, where once you serve your punishment, you're no longer a threat to society. This is a group of people who need to be permanently kept away from our children. The math says that these people are more likely to hurt a child again than not.

Schools should be a safe space for children, and it should never be a judgement call for an educator to make on whether to allow a “former” predator around children. In learning more about the man referenced above, I learned that our current principal, the former principal, and the middle school principal were ALL manipulated by this man over the years to gain access to school functions on several occasions. No one would ever imagine that the principal of their school would ever allow someone like this to be near children, but these excellent educators were talked into it. Because of all these reasons, I URGE you to take that decision out of the hands of people who are unqualified to make it and place the safety of both children and sex offenders in the hands of the law.

Thank you for your consideration.

Brad Mullins

Stilwell, KS

Long-term recidivism of child molesters. – R K Hanson et al. J Consult Clin Psychol. 1993 Aug

Comparison of personality traits in pedophiles, abstinate opiate addicts, and healthy controls: considering pedophilia as an addictive behavior. – Lisa J Cohen et al. J Nerv Ment Dis. 2008 Nov