

Sex Offender Law and Policy

The law and policy surrounding sex offenses has long been an arena of active controversy and dynamic evolution. Debates over the substantive doctrines and procedural rules surrounding rape, for example, have raged for decades, and these issues have recently taken on constitutional dimensions as the Supreme Court has examined state efforts to impose the death penalty for child rapes. But in recent years, legal and public policy debates have gone beyond how to define and punish sex offenses as the focus has turned to how the law can and should regulate sex offenders. Civil confinement laws, registration requirements, residency restrictions, GPS tracking and other schemes focused on controlling and monitoring sex offenders are now an integral part of the criminal justice landscape at the federal, state and even local levels.

The articles in this Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law symposium provide a sample of the challenging legal and policy issues that are arising from modern efforts to control and monitor sex offenders. In addition to bringing new insights to challenging questions surrounding sex offender laws and policies, the articles in this symposium document various ways in which modern sex offender regulations have impacted traditional norms and foundation principles in the operation of modern criminal justice systems.