

04/01/25

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To the RI General Assembly,

Thank you for the opportunity to write to you about this change to the current law. I am a resident of Cranston, RI and as such wrote to my Representative, Representative Richard Fascia about this concerning matter that I believe most Rhode Islanders don't even know about. In March of 2023, after the RI ACLU challenged the law regarding level 3 sex offenders living 1000 feet from a school, a Federal Judge ruled that part of the law was unconstitutional. Therefore since then level 3 sex offenders can live right next to an elementary school if they wanted to. Level 3 sex offenders are those offenders most likely to reoffend. So since this ruling, level 1 and 2 offenders can't live 300 feet from a school, but the level 3 offenders who are most likely to recommit a sexually violent offense are allowed to live closely to the schools of our little children. As a citizen of this state with a 2 year old boy, and another baby due in July, I fear for my kids that there could be a sex offender that buys a house next to their elementary school, and starts watching the kids playing recess from his window, planning his next offense.

I am also a Detective with the Lincoln Police Department and have been a law enforcement officer for over 11 years of experience. I am also the Detective in charge of registering sex offenders for my Department. I can tell you that this situation where a level 3 sex offender can live next to a school has already happened. There was a level 3 sex offender who lives in a house that is directly next door to a school called Northern RI Collaborative In Manville. Luckily the school closed June of 2023, so it was only a few months that he was living so closely to an elementary school. In my experience with dealing with the level 3 sex offenders, they are the ones we really need to be worried about coming after our children. I don't want them to have access to live in a house so close to a school and further their temptations to reoffend. Since the law is still in effect preventing level 1 and 2 offenders from living 300 feet from a school, the easiest and simplest way to correct this would be to just change the language to require all sex offenders to live 300 feet from a school, so there is at least that distance barrier from the school and their homes.

I urge you to support this bill, H 5925, and get this loophole closed, to ensure the safety of all our children. Thank you.

*Joseph T Ricci III*

(\*electronically signed)