

NEW LEGISLATION SENATE BILL 746

On May 26, 2005, Patricia C. Jessamy, the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, went to Annapolis to attend the signing of Senate Bill 746. This new law will require the Juvenile Court to order and review a report from the Department of Social Services before awarding guardianship of an abused or neglected child. The report must include information regarding the prospective guardian's home and past history, as well as a history of any physical or mental health problems the individual has experienced.

This legislation arose out of the highly publicized murder of 15 year old Ciara Jobes, which was prosecuted by the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office. The Juvenile court had previously awarded guardianship of Ciara to Satrina Roberts, without realizing that Ms. Roberts suffered from a serious and debilitating mental illness.

In response to this horrific case, Mrs. Jessamy joined Senator Lisa Gladden, Delegate Ann Marie Doory, and child welfare advocates from across the state to lobby for changes to Maryland law. As a result of this legislation, Juvenile Court judges will have much more information about prospective guardians, and, hopefully, no Maryland child will ever again be placed with a guardian as dangerous as Satrina Roberts.

Summary submitted by Julie Drake, Chief, Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, Family Felony Violence

Behavior That May Indicate A Child Is Being Sexually Abused

Some of the behaviors listed below can be part of a child's normal development. However, if you observe multiple indicators, or if the child's behavior appears suddenly, there may be reason for concern.

- Extreme changes in behavior such as loss of appetite, recurrent nightmares, disturbed sleep patterns, or fear of the dark
- Regression to more infantile behavior patterns, such as bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, or excessive crying
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Vaginal or rectal bleeding, pain, itching, swollen genitals or vaginal discharge
- Unusual interest in, or exceptional knowledge of, sexual matters
- Expressing affection in ways inappropriate for the age of the child
- Fear of or intense aversion to being left alone with a particular person
- Aggressive, disruptive or delinquent behavior, withdrawal

Information Provided by Family and Children's Services of Central Maryland (www.fcsmd.org)

THE NEW CHILD ABUSE CENTER, INC.



Heather Widmeyer, BCAC Financial Manager



Dr. Mesa Baker, BCAC



BCAC, Turn.Around Staff



Maureen McCareen, LCSW-C, BCAC Forensic Interviewer and Shirley Dean, CPS-Consent Decree Unit

Baltimore, Maryland 21202
208 The Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse
Patricia C. Jessamy, State's Attorney
Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office



Statutory Rape Statistics

Data from Baltimore City and from other U.S. cities are very consistent: adolescent girls who have boyfriends that are significantly older (by 4 or more years) are more likely to suffer a bad health consequence from that relationship than are teenage girls whose boyfriends are similar in age.

Adolescent Girls With Older Boyfriends Are:

- More likely to be sexually active at a younger age, and are at a greater risk for sexual exploitation.
- Less likely to use a condom if they have sex with their boyfriend.
- More likely to become pregnant unintentionally.
- More likely to get a sexually transmitted infection (not only Gonorrhea and Chlamydia, which are infections we can treat, but some research shows that they are more likely to get HIV, a serious infection for which we have no cure).

Also in Baltimore, we are seeing syphilis cases in teenage girls, a problem that is only very rarely seen in teenagers in other cities. Syphilis in teenage girls is nearly always transmitted to them as a result of having sex with a much older man (8-10 or more years older).

Teens and their parents should be aware that relationships with older boyfriends are riskier to their health. Parents should discuss these risks with their children and monitor their children's dating activity. If an older man has taken an interest in their daughter and refuses to stop his inappropriate behavior, parents should report him to the police.

Article Submitted by Peter L. Beilenson, M.D., M.P.H., Baltimore City Commissioner of Health

Special Thanks

The State's Attorney's Office for Baltimore City would like to extend a special "Thank You" to My Sister's Place Lodge. Several program participants from My Sister's Place Lodge volunteer their services to assist with the mass mailing of our community newsletter. Their dedication is vital to the success of this project. My Sister's Place Lodge is a two-year transitional housing program, located at 111 W. Mulberry Street. The Lodge serves women with a history of homelessness who have been diagnosed with chronic mental illness. The mission is to help the residents return to a life of stability and find a permanent home where they can live a life of self-sufficiency. For additional information, call (410) 528-9002.

Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office

Community/Victim Services Division
(410) 396-1897

Family Bereavement Center
(410) 396-7351

Wabash District Court
(410) 878-8161

North Avenue District Court
(410) 878-8575

Hargrove District Court
(410) 878-8440

Domestic Violence Unit
(410) 396-7444

Housing Unit
Nuisance Abatement
(410) 396-4140

Child Support
(410) 347-2011

Administrative Offices
(410) 396-4001

Contact the State's Attorney's
Office Community Services
Division to be placed on the newsletter mailing list at (410) 396-1897 or
view it online at www.stattorney.org.



The BCSAO Community Newsletter

Working Together with the Community, Businesses, Law Enforcement, and Government, We Can Make A Difference!

Summer 2005

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Baltimore Child Abuse Center Calendar of Upcoming Events

Golf Tournament and Charity Auction September 26, 2005

Oakmont Green Golf Course
Hampstead, Maryland
1:00 p.m..
Entry Fee: \$100

Golf Tournament and Charity Auction sponsored by the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office and the Baltimore City Police Department, to benefit the Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc. Contact Detective William Ritz at (410) 396-2121 for more details.

Gospel Concert Winter, 2006

Gospel concert fundraiser to benefit the Baltimore Child Abuse Center. Details to follow.

Services at the Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc.

The Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc. (BCAC) was created in 1986 to improve investigations and reduce the harmful effects of child sexual abuse on children and families. The State's Attorney's Office for Baltimore City, The Baltimore City Police Department, and the Baltimore City Department of Social Services Child Protective Services agreed to a protocol which provides for just one interview for the child, rather than each agency conducting a separate interview. The interview is attended by representatives from these agencies and the child's family. This multi-disciplinary approach promotes an effective criminal justice approach and human services response, while also avoiding the need to put the abused child through multiple interviews.

The benefits of this multi-disciplinary approach to allegations of child sexual abuse are many. The BCAC has minimized the number of investigative interviews, improved the quality

of the intervention, and has addressed other sensitive areas of concern such as tracking clients through the system, providing psychological and medical assessment, preparing children for court, providing therapy, and coordinating other resources.

The goal of this system is to provide an atmosphere for the child that is both child and family friendly, and also one that will mediate any further trauma. Another goal is to promote more effective criminal justice outcomes.

For more information on the Baltimore

Child Abuse Center, please call: (410) 396-6147.



The New Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc., 2300 N. Charles Street



The New Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc., Waiting Room



Dear Community Resident:

Thank you for continuing to partner with the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office (BCSAO) in our efforts to improve the quality of life within our communities.

Many city residents have asked about child sexual abuse and the Maryland Sex Offense Registry. This edition of the BCSAO Newsletter will hopefully educate you about sex offense charges and how the Sex Offense Registry works, and this information can empower us to protect our children.

You can read about the Baltimore Child Abuse Center, its new offices, and the services it provides, such as individual and group counseling for child victims of sexual offenses. The Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, the Baltimore Police Department, and the Baltimore City Department of Social Services Child Protective Services agreed to a protocol which provides just one interview rather than each agency conducting separate interviews. Trained professionals conduct the interview and counseling at the Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Incorporated, in a child-friendly environment.

Additionally, I want to take this opportunity to educate the public on the law involving

what is generally called statutory rape, which the law classified as a 2nd degree sex offense. The term "age difference sexual crimes" perhaps better describes these acts, because the sexual relationship is between a minor under the age of 14, and an individual who is at least four years older.

Age difference sexual crimes permeate all socio-economic classes and all sexual orientations in our city. These acts pose serious public health risks. Some victims have contracted sexually transmitted diseases from these sexual relationships. Recently, the BCSAO partnered with the Baltimore City Health Department when Health Commissioner Dr. Peter Bielensen kicked-off a public awareness campaign about the health risks to child victims of sexual offenses.

Age difference sexual offense ... 2nd degree rape ... carries a possible 20-year prison sentence. Individuals convicted have their photograph placed, FOR LIFE, on the Maryland Sex Offense Registry. Additionally, we are seeing that more and more of the sexual contact between the offender and victim is not "sexual intercourse."

Recently, in one case, a 31-year-old offender pled guilty to 2nd degree rape. He had sexual intercourse with a 12-year old girl, who was a runaway from home. A Judge sentenced him to 7-years in prison and ordered him to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

The Message Should Be Clear:

- Individuals who prey on younger victims will get caught, and do go to prison. We take this crime very seriously.
- The community should know that it is the responsibility of each individual to know the age of his/her sexual partner. Consent is not an issue. The law in essence says a minor cannot consent to a sexual relationship. Individuals who are convicted can be ordered to register FOR LIFE on the Maryland Sex Offense Registry.
- The responsibility of each of us as parents or guardians is to know what our minor children are doing. Also, we should be aware of behavior changes that may indicate a child is being sexually abused. One of the articles in this newsletter provides some behavioral changes that may be signs of sexual abuse.
- Watch for changes in behavior. For instance, keep an eye on your child's cellular telephone. Who are they calling? Who is calling them? Who are they e-mailing or text messaging? These simple checks can tip a parent off to possible trouble. If you suspect any sex abuse, call the police immediately.

Our best cases are ones in which a parent or guardian is involved. When parents call the police and participate in the trial process, the chances of a successful prosecution increase. It is only through working together that we will be able to protect our children.

Sincerely,

Patricia C. Jessamy
State's Attorney for Baltimore City

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Sex Offender Registration

1. *What is the Sex Offense Registry?*

The Sex Offense Registry contains public information maintained by the State of Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. The Registry provides information on sex offenders who reside in Maryland. It also includes out of state sex offenders who are either employed or attend school in Maryland.

2. *Who is a registered sex offender?*

A registered sex offender is an individual who has been convicted of a sexual offense against a child, rape, or any other sexual offense.

3. *When does a sex offender have to register?*

An individual who has been convicted of a sexual offense and who is required under the law to register must do so within seven (7) days of being released from jail or the sentencing date.

4. *How often does a sex offender have to register?*

A sex offender must register with the local police department either every 90 days, or annually, for either 10 years, or life, depending upon the nature of the crime for which he or she was convicted.

5. *What agency is in charge of registering sex offenders?*

The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services is responsible for maintaining the Sex Offense Registry. Child sex offenders and sexually violent predators who live or work in Baltimore City must register with the Baltimore City Police Department Sex Offender Registry Division.

6. *What happens if a sex offender does not register?*

A convicted sex offender who knowingly fails to register, fails to provide a change of address, or who knowingly supplies false information may be prosecuted. The penalty for failing to register is no more than 3 years and/or a fine up to \$5,000.

7. *If a sex offender is not on probation or parole, does the Sex Offender Registry agency supervise them?*

No. The Sex Offender Registry agency maintains information regarding the status of registrants' classification and residency. Although it verifies information and seeks warrants for those who fail to register, it is not a supervisory agency.

8. *Are registered sex offenders allowed to live near schools?*

Registered sex offenders are not prohibited from living near schools, or anywhere else.

9. *Are schools notified when registered sex offender moves into the area near schools?*

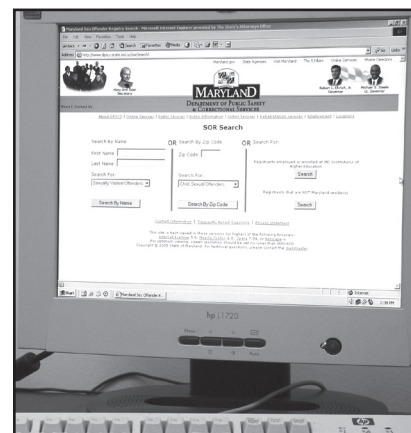
Local law enforcement sends written notice of the child sexual offender registrant to the superintendent in the city/county where the child sexual offender is to reside, or where a child sexual offender who is not a resident of the State will work or attend school.

10. *How can I protect my children from sex offenders?*

There are several ways to protect your children:

- Know who lives in your neighborhood.
- Talk to you children about basic rules of safety.
- Know where your children are and with whom they are spending time.
- Be aware of the environment where your children play and hang out.
- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Promptly report any suspicious or criminal activity to the local police department.

Accessing The Sex Offenders' Registry



The Internet site to access the Sex Offenders' Registry is www.dpscs.state.md.us/sorSearch.

You may choose to search by zip code, name, registrant's employment or enrollment at a Maryland college or university. You may also search for registrants who are not Maryland residents.

Once you have selected your search type, you may further search for a particular type of registrant. For example, under "Search By Name," you may search for "all offender types" or for "sexual predators."

If you are not certain of the possible registrant's name, it may be best to search by zip code. You are not limited to just one mode of search.

The Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc.

The mission of the Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc. is to provide all reported victims of child sexual abuse with a comprehensive interview, medical treatment referrals and crisis counseling services to give them the tools they need to repair their lives.

The BCAC, Inc.

- has the responsibility of providing comprehensive services to all children reported to be sexually abused in our community.
- provides a place where children can come to feel safe and to begin to heal. Each year over 1,200 children are reported to be victims of child sexual abuse in Baltimore City.
- conducts investigative interviews with trained, licensed psychologists and social workers who are skilled in child development interviews. Police detectives, Child Protective Services and prosecutors watch the interviews from an adjoining room. After the interview, the team meets to make joint investigative decisions.
- conducts medical examinations. Children also receive medical examinations by board-certified pediatricians in a cheerful on-site medical clinic.
- provides treatment referrals. The key to breaking the destructive cycle of abuse and overcoming the trauma of abuse is through sexual abuse counseling. BCAC, Inc. finds appropriate, affordable treatment for families requesting assistance. All of the services, including transportation to the interview, the medical exam and the treatment referral, are free to the reported victims of child abuse in Baltimore.

Take Action...You can help support the Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc., a 501(3)(c) organization.

- I would like to give a gift. Enclosed is my check.
- I would like to volunteer my time.
- I would like to help with fundraising.
- I will ask my favorite civic group, social club or community organization to make a contribution.
- I would like to leave a gift in my will to BCAC, Inc.
- I will ask my church or synagogue to have a special collection for BCAC, Inc.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zipcode: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Please send to:

Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc.
2300 North Charles Street, 4th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 396-6147

The BCAC, Inc. is primarily supported by contributions from caring individuals and organizations and with state grants.

The Baltimore Police Sex Offender Registry Unit

The Sex Offender Registry Unit comes under the umbrella of the Baltimore City Police Department's Child Abuse Division. This unit has 1 sergeant and 2 detectives who are tasked with registering and monitoring over 800 registered child sex offenders. The detectives work closely with jurisdictions throughout the country and state to ensure that the actions of registered offenders do not go unnoticed.

Additionally, members of the Sex Offender Registry Unit actively pursue offenders who fail to register. Members will investigate reports of suspicious activity by possible sex offenders in and around schools and neighborhoods, and conduct investigations into child pornography.

Members of the Sex Offender Registry Unit can be contacted at (443) 984-7388.

Article Submitted by Lt. Michael Newton, Baltimore Police Department

Helpful Numbers

Illegal Drugs	(410) 685-DRUGS
Fire, Police & Ambulance	911
Non-Emergency Services	311
Community Law Center	(410) 366-0922
Community Mediation	(410) 516-1981
Illegal Gun (GunStoppers)	(410) 685-GUNS
Metro CrimeStoppers	(410) 276-8888
Family Helpline	(410) 685-0525
Poison Control Center	(410) 528-7701
Rape Crisis Center	(410) 828-6390
Transit & Traffic	
Emergencies	(410) 396-3050
Baltimore City	
Switchboard	(410) 396-3100
Commission on Aging and Retirement	(410) 396-4933
Baltimore City Community Relations	(410) 396-3141
Baltimore City Health Department	(410) 396-4398
Baltimore City Department of Education	(410) 396-8700
Department of Social Services	(410) 396-4600
Baltimore City Department of Recreation	(410) 396-7900

Legal Services

Housing Court	(410) 396-4140
Legal Services for the Elderly	(410) 396-1322
Office of the Public Defender	(410) 333-4900
Attorney General Consumer Protection	(410) 631-3053

We welcome your suggestions and questions. Please send them to:

Community/Victim Services Division
Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office
110 N. Calvert Street, Room 410
Clarence Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse
Baltimore, MD 21202

Phone: (410) 396-1897
mail@stattorney.org