

A. Questions About The Watch House

1. What is The Watch House?

The Watch House is not-for-profit campus facility where dangerous repeat sex offenders will live for an indefinite amount of time. They will be monitored 24 hours a day. The living arrangement will include psychiatric and recreational facilities – all free time will be controlled.

2. Why is it important? Why should I support The Watch House?

More than 50% of convicted sex offenders continue to re-offend. Society can not afford to keep all the repetitive sex offenders in prison. The Watch House gives society a way to have sex offenders in the community and have verifiable safety.

Because The Watch House requires land-use legislation and solves the “where sex offenders can live problem,” there is a political hurdle that can be overcome only with citizen support.

3. How does The Watch House ensure public safety?

- Repeat sex offenders will live in a gated community under direct supervision.
- The Watch House will use GPS and all other forms of electronic, mechanical and human surveillance.
- They will live in a therapeutic treatment community where everyone must show commitment to honesty and change.
- The Watch House is designed to potentially be for life; graduation is possible, not expected.
- They have to prove that they have truly changed for years before they can move out.
- They have to request to be in The Watch House; otherwise they should be in prison.
- At The Watch House the sex offenders will have 118 hours of direct professional supervision per week versus the current 2 hours.

4. Is The Watch House a fair, just and wise alternative?

The Watch House is a civil liberty enhancement, not a threat because it offers sex felons an alternative to prison that is in the community. Note, community placement is a privilege, not a right, offered to convicted felons. Please see research.

- The Watch House is a lot safer and a more meaningful existence for the sex offender than prison.
- The sex offenders are benefited by constant therapy.
- The Watch House will be much more available and practical than prison for doing work with sex offender families.

5. Is The Watch House doable – can the project succeed?

Yes. Locally and nationally, all of America is looking for a common sense, powerful and fair way to control sex offenders that does not destroy our state budgets. The Watch House does all of this, plus it is based on a site selection formula that is a political winner.

6. Why do judges want The Watch House?

Judges and parole officers want a safe option that is between prison and standard probation. The Watch House offers the community the greatest safety without the cost of prison.

7. Why do mental health professionals support the The Watch House?

The data gathered from repeat sex offenders living in The Watch House will prove invaluable to the mental health community. The data will be used identify how to eliminate repetitive offenses.

8. How will The Watch House be paid for?

The state will pay for The Watch House. Then the sex offenders will work at jobs and careers to pay back the state.

9. What are the cost savings to the public?

Repeat sex offenders sentenced to The Watch House contribute to society by working and paying for their keep and taxes, unlike prison. Also, unlike prison, The Watch House will be able to harness the entrepreneurial capacities of sex offender spending much of their lives living at The Watch House.

10. How much will The Watch House cost?

The cost for construction and operation will be determined in the next phase of development. This next phase is the design / cost / benefit / comparison and continued community education phase. To the degree possible, all of the cost details will be worked out in this up coming phase. The Watch House is seeking funding for this phase of the project.

In the end, The Watch House will be based upon offenders repaying the state for the entire cost.

11. Where is The Watch House going to be located?

One of the special benefits of The Watch House is its site selection method. Picking a site and then defending that site is not politically doable. Instead The Watch House has developed politically viable formula for site selection based upon low population density, reasonable commute time to the center of employment and other necessary features for a community-based sex offender housing solution.

12. How will public safety be guaranteed while the sex offender is at work?

Living in a restricted environment reduces the chances of offenders recommitting sex crimes even when the offender goes to work. Offenders will be monitored through frequent contact with employers, GPS, polygraph tests and various means for controlling transportation.

13. What if a sex offender re-offends while in The Watch House?

He will go back to prison.

14. Wouldn't sex offenders (and us) be better off with them in prison?

Society needs a financially superior option to prison that offers reliable safety for the life of the sex offender. That sex offender needs a safe setting for demonstrating that he has changed (if he ever does). The demonstration can not happen in prison.

15. Who will run The Watch House? Where does the authority come from to control the sex offenders?

The Watch House will derive its authority by being a community corrections program. To protect the prioritization of public safety, the board will have no professional stake holders on the board. Instead the board will have an administrative staff made of leading experts.

16. Who will staff The Watch House?

The board of The Watch House, like other community corrections boards, will hire a qualified company to provide supervision and treatment staff for 24 hour coverage.

17. What happens if we do not create The Watch House?

If we do not create The Watch House citizens who have been violated by sex offenders will become progressively more fed up with government's inability to protect communities and become more inclined towards vigilantism.

B. Public Safety & Sex Offenders

1. I can protect my own children, can't I?

Only somewhat. While parents can talk with, and guide, their children daily, children have to have a sense of trust to be able to function in the world. Sex offenders know how to take advantage of that trust.

2. Where should citizens focus their attention regarding sex assault prevention?

Two places. One, talk with your children about all sensitive subjects - often. Two, make sure our government actually controls the sex offenders it catches and convicts.

3. Is there no cure?

Studies of treatment to eliminate re-offense by sex offenders indicate that over time, more than 50% sexually re-offend. Please see research.

4. How many sex offenders re-offend, even with treatment?

The exact number is not knowable because of low victim reporting. But the number is above 50%. Please see research.

5. What value is treatment if there is no cure?

If we are to control sex offenders living in the community, we have to know what they are up to. So we have to talk to them. What we talk about has to be relevant to whether, or not, they are likely to re-offend. That includes their past behaviors, wishes, fantasies, whatever motivates them and their secrets. All of this has to be done in painful detail and often. It is not possible to learn enough to be safe by relying on GPS, polygraph and once a week check-ins with probation officers. Only mental health therapists have the professional license and social expectation to delve into these areas of a person's life. While treatment can not produce a cure, it can, along with all of the controls of The Watch House, render the sex offender safe when he is "off campus" at work.

6. What control does probation place on sex offenders?

Sex offenders on probation are seen, in the office and random home checks, for approx. 1 hour every week. Additionally probation officers oversee personal computers, what treatment programs do and that polygraph happen two times a year. Otherwise their resources are so limited that probation officers have to be more "reactive" than "proactive" when comes to community protection.

7. Where do convicted sex offenders live now?

Sex offenders currently live with family or friends which relationships they manipulate. Or they live alone which is also dangerous. Progressively in more areas, because of sex offender zoning restrictions, they are becoming transients which is dangerous. 65% of convicted sex offenders go on probation, and, of the remaining 35% that go to prison, most get out. So the community is where sex offenders live. To date there is no long term residential solution. The Watch House provides a safe and practical solution.

8. Why are sex offenders safer living together instead of with family, friends or alone? Will multiple sex offenders living under one roof breed more deviant behavior?

Repetitive sex offenders are trust violators and tend to require either secrecy or control of the people around them to get away with sexually assaulting. Family and friends are relationships repetitive sex offenders have learned how to manipulate. Making trust violators live with other trust violating sex offenders both ruins their privacy and takes away relationships they can control.

9. What data supports this (#8)?

The Colorado Department of Public Safety division of Criminal Justice has published data showing that sex offenders living in shared living arrangements committed fewer violations than those living alone or with family or friends.

10. Why should I care about the words “recidivism” and “re-offense?”

The truth about the real rate of re-offense by sex offenders is frequently obscured by “recidivism” numbers. Recidivism is defined as “documented re-offense,” and that refers to re-arrest rates. The real rate of re-offense is not knowable because victims of sex offenses very seldom report. The most significant thing to understand about recidivism data is that it is a huge under-representation of the real rate or re-offense.

If the public understood that well above 50% of sex offenders eventually commit more sex crimes, even after treatment, the public would be pressing the politicians for better solutions. The Watch House is just that – a better solution.

11. What is “crossover” and why is that such an important concept?

Crossover refers to the fact that the majority of convicted adult sex offenders have more than one kind of victim. For example rapists also molest and perpetrators of homosexual crimes also perpetrate heterosexual crimes. This underscores the difficulty of controlling sex offenders. We can not rely on keeping sex offenders away from just one victim pool.

12. What does Zero Tolerance mean?

Zero tolerance is the only position we should have toward the serious problem of sex offender management. All other approaches are forms of “reduced harm” which basically means anything professionals do is an improvement and that should provide comfort.

Zero Tolerance has “no more victims” as the only acceptable end point of our interventions. Zero Tolerance is the only way we can assure the community that our stewardship over sex offenders in the community will be sufficiently relentless.

Since there is no known cure, we must give up expectations of case closure. We need to embrace the “foreverness” of sex offender management.

13. Are all sex offenders equally dangerous?

Absolutely not. Of convicted adult sex offenders, approximately 20% are evaluated to be low risk (i.e., to sexually re-offend). These include young adults who are immature and have consenting sex with adolescent females. Unfortunately, we do not have a way to assess on a case-by-case basis which of the repetitive sex offenders will not re-offend.