



**SEX OFFENDER STATISTICS**

- 747,408** total number of sex offenders throughout the U.S.
- 265,000** number of sex offenders supervised by a corrections agency
- 5.3** percent of sex offenders that will commit another sex crime after being released
- \$22,000** average annual cost to incarcerate a sex offender
- 30** percent of children who are sexually abused that will become sexually abusive later during their life
- 3.5** average number of years a sex offender serves with an 8-year sentence
- 60** percent of sexually molested boys who were molested by someone they knew
- 80** percent of sexually molested girls who were molested by someone they knew

\*according to: www.statisticbrain.com

## Educational quality should trump value



Connor Stangler

You can't really escape it. "Affordable" is on the Truman State homepage. We've been named a "Best Value College" by Kiplinger's magazine. The first line responding to the question, "Why Truman?" on the admissions page is a reference not to top-notch quality, but value.

When did we become the college more conscious of the dollar sign than the education? There are two potential problems with this financial mindset.

First, we should attempt to keep tuition rates low, but what message do we send by emphasizing the price tag alongside, or even before, the quality of Truman? This is not a budget issue, but a communicative one. With our advertisements and pitches to potential students, our values emerge. "Affordability" before "excellence" implies efficiency and low costs, qualities more appropriate for a retailer than a highly selective educational institution. "Excellence" before "affordability" implies a commitment to rigor and academic challenge. The affordability of the degree can still be a part of the Truman experience, but it should not be the central element. Parents might appreciate the cost, but they will respect the quality.

Second, we might be in danger of taking our own financial message too seriously. Affordability and quality are not mutually exclusive, but eventually the second comes at expense of the first. The more we cut to save the student, the more potential we have to hurt the student. On the other hand, our administration suffers because of the bondage of a state government that doesn't seem to value higher education. The legislature fails to understand the unquantifiable significance of a liberal arts education and thus punishes it. If the financial issue is beyond our control, the communications issue is not.

We also have to consider a significant complication at the heart of this issue. Affordable education is a must. If we value higher education and its countless social and economic benefits, then we must make it financially accessible for everyone, regardless of class or background. Our universities should be gateways, not gatekeepers.

However, there is an essential difference between providing a cheap product because it's economically efficient and providing an affordable education because we know the inherent value of knowledge and intellectual expansion. A business can lower its prices and as long as the consumer goes home with a few extra dollars in his or her pockets thanks to some bargain deals, everyone wins. The story extends beyond the checkout counter, though. When we draw the line from our purchase to the sinfully underpaid and overworked manufacturers in a third world country to the relatively low quality of our product and to our own contribution to a corporate culture that champions cheapness, the moral price of our bargain buy starts to increase. When the financial bottom line is the most important consideration, other things suffer.

Alternatively, we recognize there is a line we can cross, cuts we can enforce and savings we can make that will hurt the student more than the savings help. We should put the education before the price. We should provide the most intellectually, socially and professionally enriching experience we can before thinking about the price tag. Cuts will come, the budget hawks will arrive and the discussions of the importance of fiscal conservatism will inevitably take place, but let's start with the assumption we are not selling a product, but molding human beings. It's not a quick transaction, but a long process developed in philosophy, biology and music classrooms. It takes constant vigilance and a commitment to quality to prevent a school from becoming a bottom-line university.

Connor Stangler is a senior English and history major from Columbia, Mo.

## Sex offender bill is flawed



Lacy Murphy

Missouri District 138 Rep. Don Phillips introduced a new bill to Congress on Feb. 6 that would make requirements for sex offender registration less restrictive. HB462 had its first public hearing Feb. 25. If passed, the bill will become effective Aug. 28, 2013. The bill, while reasonable, needs further alteration to become more effective.

Sex offenders are currently separated into three tiers. Tier one offenders include anyone adjudicated for invasion of privacy, child molestation in the second degree and sexual misconduct in the second degree, just to name a few. Sounds pretty scary, right?

Let me wade through some of this judicial mumbo jumbo for you.

Invasion of privacy entails photographing or videotaping someone partially or fully nude without his or her consent, child molestation in the second degree is committed when someone younger than age 17 is

subjected to sexual contact, and sexual misconduct occurs when the accused exposes their genitals or has sexual intercourse in a public place. Basically, tier one offenders include peeping Toms and exhibitionists — still serious crimes, but nonviolent.

Tier two offenders include, but are not limited to, anyone adjudicated for statutory rape, statutory sodomy, promoting child pornography, sex trafficking or child molestation when the victim is younger than age 14. Tier three offenders — among others — include kidnapping, forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual abuse of a child and sexual trafficking of a child.

With this legislation, a person on the sexual offenders registry might file a petition to be removed from the list after 10 years if they are considered a tier one offender, a tier II offender after 20 years and a tier III offender after 25 years. Tier III offenders are only able to file for petition if their requirement to register results from a juvenile adjudication.

J.D. Rees, Missouri Highway Patrol Sex Offender Registry Manager, recently said more than 1,000 people immediately could petition to be removed from the list if the bill is passed, according to [www.stlouis.cbslocal.com](http://www.stlouis.cbslocal.com).

So how does this affect us? Kirksville currently is home to 52 registered sex offenders, according to [www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com), giving Kirksville a higher ratio of residents to sex offenders than Adair County or Missouri.

After skimming through the list of offenders throughout Kirksville, I found

two offenders who live on the same street as me and whose crime included those that immediately would allow them to petition to be removed from the registry if this bill were passed. I wouldn't know someone convicted of sodomy lived right down the street. Even if it has been 20 years, being able to access this information is important.

Missouri is one of 19 states compliant with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification and is known as one of the strictest states concerning sexual offenders. With this legislation, Missouri would only meet the bare minimum requirements. However, a 2012 study made available by the U.S. Department of Justice found current guidelines from SORNA have not proven to be significantly effective for protecting citizens or reducing recidivism. It appears our current laws need revision, but HB462 doesn't appear to be making the changes we need.

While this bill allows offenders who might have had a lapse of judgment when they were juveniles or are not guilty of a violent offense to start anew, it doesn't protect us from the more severe cases. So what do we do? How can we judge who will continue to be a threat to future society or who has been fully rehabilitated? The discussion concerning legislation for these issues is difficult, but is one that needs to take place. Citizens should review this bill and seriously think about its ramifications.

Lacy Murphy is a junior French major from Springfield, Mo.

## How should the lives of sex offenders be limited to protect others?

"I think there definitely should be a sex offender list so everyone can know who they're living around and who their children are living around."

Riley Keltner sophomore

"Having to declare your address is definitely important if the crime is more serious."

Erin Coats senior

"I think the public information on sex offenders is pretty effective. They shouldn't be allowed to live near areas with lots of children."

Lauren Thomeczek senior

"It depends on the sex offense. We need a law that takes the offense into account. Probation, forced therapy, and institutionalization is necessary in some cases."

James Shaw junior



## AROUND THE QUAD

## Voting Rights Act provision should be reconsidered



Adam Rollins

Outdated laws passed by the U.S. federal government almost 50 years ago cause states to suffer for past injustices.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was a pinnacle achievement of the Civil Rights movement and remains one of the primary assurances of minority voting rights throughout the United States. However, certain portions of the law have lost relevance but still are enforced today as they were 40 years ago.

Section 5 of the VRA outlines the procedure for identifying states and other voting jurisdictions that must get permission for any changes with voting procedure from the U.S. Department of Justice or a federal court in Washington, D.C. This section of the law has become unnecessary and hinders the management of districts' voting procedures.

The formula for identifying which jurisdictions are subject to this section is based on election data from 1972 and previous years, and currently isolates nine states and more than 66 counties and townships throughout the U.S. as requiring this stricter oversight, according to a Feb. 28 NBC News article. These voting districts are treated like criminals on probation, and are closely monitored for any hint of misconduct, based on the data collected 40 years ago.

In fact, these districts are the victims of discrimination because they are subject to the whims and biases of whichever federal government office receives their case. Most districts are not subject to such strict oversight, and therefore have more freedom to manage their own voting procedures.

When the VRA first was passed, I'm sure this measure was necessary for efficient enforcement of the law. But we live in a different century now. Does voter discrimination still happen? Maybe so — nevertheless, we have come a long way from where we were during 1965. The only way to keep moving forward is to stop treating these states and counties as if there are secret factions of white supremacists waiting for the opportunity to seize power and return to the days of Jim Crow.

As long as we retain the fear that racism might resurge as a dominant political ideology, we will never arrive at the point where race is no longer a consideration. By fearing racism, we empower it and legitimize it. Only by treating racism as unintelligent, illogical, insensitive and unfit for any influence upon whatsoever can we end its influence upon our country.

There are two other good reasons to repeal Section 5 of the VRA. First, Section 2 of the VRA prohibits discriminatory voting procedures at all levels of government. The only difference is it does not require certain districts to have changes approved ahead of

time. This measure is acceptable because it aligns more closely with other established laws. Just as with prior restraint laws, which prohibit the government from censoring a newspaper before it is printed, governments should not be able to punish voting districts before they have broken any laws.

Besides, many current politicians would enthusiastically oppose discriminatory procedures because the advent of minority voting rights revealed the members of many minority communities tend to vote supporting similar interests. Having the support of one or more of these minority voting draw graphics gives a politician a significant advantage over his or her opponents and makes maintaining the status quo of minority voters exceptionally appealing.

Instead of punishing states for wrongdoings of more than 40 years ago, let's give them a second chance.

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