

Washington State Association of Children's Advocacy Centers
2008 WSACAC Legislative Committee Position Statement

Sex Offender Task Force Recommendations on Victim's Services

In response to the tragic death of 12 year old Zina Linnik at the hands of a known sex offender, Governor Gregoire convened a task force to examine the current system and make recommendations as to what changes needed to be made to Washington's sex offender statutes and policies.

Many of the recommendations made by the Sex Offender Task Force are focused on investigation, monitoring offenders, and community awareness. One recommendation is focused on victims of crime. This recommendation states that the "continued services and supports for victims of sexual assault is essential to holding offenders accountable."

In discussing this recommendation, the report stresses that:

- Prevention is a primary concern, and support for the ability of rape crisis centers to conduct community prevention activities was supported.
- The legislature was encouraged to support child-centered services for child victims of sexual abuse.
- Reviewing and updating child sexual abuse protocols are recommended.
- Resources are needed to stimulate locally designated approaches to multidisciplinary coordination to make sure victims are not lost in the process and offenders are held accountable.

WSACAC supports the allocation of funding, as recommended by the Sex Offender Task Force, for "services and supports for victims of sexual assault" and, "locally designated approaches to multidisciplinary coordination." It also supports increased access to child centered services provided by sexual assault programs for victims of child sexual abuse.

In allocating these funds, it should be clearly stated what the funds support and justification made for how they will address the recommendations of the report. There are a variety of programs that serve children who have been sexually abused. However, the Children's Advocacy Center model stands out as integrating all the service elements recommended in the report:

- Child centered
- Facilitates the ability to broaden protocols and services beyond current LE and CPS cases
- Is a locally designated model of multidisciplinary coordination
- Maintains records and services that ensure the victim is not lost in the process
- Proven effective at holding offenders accountable

It is the position of WSACAC that Children's Advocacy Centers should be considered a viable and effective model for addressing many of the recommendations put forth in the October 2007 Sex Offender Task Force report.

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