

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

March 19, 2009

The Honorable Eric Holder, Jr.  
Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Attorney General Holder:

We write to request that you exercise your statutory authority to extend for one year the time for all states and other jurisdictions to comply with provisions of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) within the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act (“the Adam Walsh Act”), P.L. No. 109-248, Title I, 120 Stat. 590-611 (2006) (codified at 42 U.S.C. § 16901 *et seq.*). Granting such an extension would allow states and other jurisdictions time to strengthen and improve existing laws and sex offender registries consistent with SORNA.

Under SORNA, Congress directed all states and other jurisdictions to comply with certain sex offender registry provisions within three years of passing the Adam Walsh Act, which was on July 27, 2006. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 16924(a). As a result, states and other jurisdictions now face a deadline in July of this year and potential penalties if they do not meet the statutory requirements of the Act.

Unfortunately, to date, no state or other jurisdiction has been able to meet the statutory requirements of SORNA and, according to the Office of the Inspector General, no state is expected to fulfill its SORNA requirements by the deadline. Despite significant efforts by many state legislatures, state and other jurisdictional agencies, there have been unforeseen difficulties in implementing the law and significant added costs, which are now even more burdensome in these difficult economic times. Timely compliance by the states and other jurisdictions also has been hindered by the fact that the SMART office did not issue its Final Regulations until June 2008. If extensions for compliance are not granted, states and other jurisdictions may face financial penalties that will only impede further efforts at compliance. A situation where all states are unable to comply with the Adam Walsh Act and suffer penalties as a result does not help advance the vital goals of the Act.

The Act does, however, permit the Attorney General to grant up to two one-year extensions of the deadline. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 16924(b). Granting this extension is supported by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the National Criminal Justice Association, and the National Conference of State Legislatures, as well as other interested groups. We all believe that effective sex offender registries must be in place in all states, and granting the first one-year extension of the SORNA requirements will help achieve this important goal.

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We understand that many states and other jurisdictions have already sought such an extension from the Justice Department, and many more, if not all, will be doing so in the coming months.

Given these circumstances, we believe it would be prudent for you to grant a one-year extension for all states and other jurisdictions at this time, without requiring individual requests.

Please contact us if you have questions concerning this request, as we hope you can move quickly to grant this extension for all states so we can make further progress improving our nations' sex offender registries.

Sincerely,



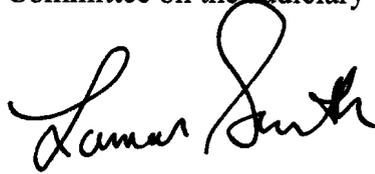
PATRICK LEAHY  
Chairman, U.S. Senate  
Committee on the Judiciary



JOHN CONYERS, JR.  
Chairman, U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on the Judiciary



ARLEN SPECTER  
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate  
Senate Judiciary Committee



LAMAR SMITH  
Ranking Member, U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on the Judiciary

cc: Laurie Robinson, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs