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## Letter from the Symposium Editor

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**LETTER *from the Symposium Editor***

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On January 26, 2007, PILR hosted its annual symposium on *Juvenile Sex Offender Registration: Problem or Solution* to provide an interdisciplinary forum on the issues surrounding the registration of juveniles as sex offenders. Attorney General Lisa Madigan gave the keynote address, and Cara Smith of the Attorney General's office followed with a policy overview. Four different panels then provided their perspectives on juvenile sex offender registration, including: social science and treatment professionals, legal advocates and law enforcement professionals, public policy advocates, and juvenile court judges. Additionally, a brave parent spoke regarding her heart-wrenching experience as the parent of both a victim and an offender.

The symposium was incredibly successful. It was well attended by a multitude of invested and enthusiastic professionals eager to discuss the complex population of juveniles who commit sex offenses. The program's panelists highlighted several important issues: the underdeveloped reason of juveniles, the complexity of sexual development, the potential of recidivism, and the possibility of rehabilitation. While some panelists favored the mandatory registration law in place at the time, there was a general consensus that juveniles who commit sex crimes are a much more multifaceted and developmentally varied population than their adult counterparts and should therefore have their registration status reviewed in a more case-specific way.

The program came in the middle of two legislative attempts to reform the "one size fits all" registration system. It came on the heels of the demise of HB 2067, a bill that would have given juvenile court justices discretion regarding registering juvenile sex offenders in sentencing. Almost immediately after the symposium, a similar bill was re-proposed in the form of SB 121, which allowed for the removal from the registry upon a judicial finding that the juvenile no longer poses a threat to society and would remove the requirement that all juveniles permanently register as sex offenders upon turning 17. In October of this year, the house and senate overrode the Governor's veto of SB 121 and amended the Sex Offender Registration Act.

The Public Interest Law Reporter was honored to contribute to this rigorous discussion in an evolving area of law, science and policy. We hope you enjoy this short exposé by some of our distinguished panelists and participants that touches on a few of the issues discussed.

Best Regards,

*Melanie MacBride*  
Symposium Editor

