



Stowell case shows need for Jessica's Law

IDAHO VALUES ALLIANCE

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STOWELL CASE SHOWS TIME FOR JESSICA'S LAW IN IDAHO

Boise – The Idaho Values Alliance is calling on the Idaho legislature to enact an Idaho version of Jessica's Law in the wake of the release of convicted pedophile Bradley Stowell.

Stowell was convicted in 1998 of molesting two young boys at a Boy Scout camp in eastern Idaho, and was released from his initial sentence early enough to have violated his probation (for viewing pornography and hanging around with children) and be sent back to prison by 2005. After serving just three years (of a possible 14-year stretch) on this second violation, he was released again in early June and is now living in a single-family neighborhood near Hillcrest Country Club in Boise.

Bryan Fischer, Executive Director of the Idaho Values Alliance, says Stowell's case shows that it is long past time to enact an Idaho version of Jessica's Law, which will impose mandatory minimum sentences for first-time convictions for sex crimes against children.

"Even Stowell's own hearing officer said last December that he needed to stay behind bars for the safety of Idaho's children, because he is almost certain to 'victimize more young and innocent children in Idaho.'"

"It's simply inexcusable for the state of Idaho to release this predator back into society, especially when he violated his probation by viewing pornography and hanging around with children.

"We need to change Idaho code so that even first-time offenders like Stowell are locked away for long mandatory minimum sentences. If we care about Idaho's children, we can and should do no less."

Noting that Stowell admitted to molesting at least two dozen other minors before being apprehended and

convicted, Fischer points out that there's nothing harsh about sending a perpetrator away for a long time after his first conviction.

"In almost every case, the perpetrator has already victimized a long string of children, who have been damaged for life by a violation of their sexual innocence."

Fischer also took notice of the complaint of lawmakers, including Idaho's governor, that implementing Jessica's Law is just too expensive. The administration calculates that it would cost \$279 million over the next 25 years to implement Jessica's Law in Idaho.

But, as Fischer points out, the administration is seeking ways to raise \$240 million a year for roads. This means that for the cost of a little more than one year of increased funding for roads, the Jessica's Law funding problem could be taken care of.

"Most Idaho moms and dads would gladly dodge potholes for an additional year to get increased protection for their children. Maybe we should take care of Jessica's Law first, and then focus on roads. If Idaho lawmakers increase spending to build roads but not to build prisons for child sex abusers, it's going to look like they care more about pavement than kids."

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