

State law leaves sex offender in the streets

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It is a state law designed to protect children - sex offenders can't live within 1,000 feet of a school, park or day care facility.

However, in Hartford City, finding a place to live that doesn't break the law is not easy.

Anthony Pollard, 62, a convicted sex offender, sleeps in his car at night because he can't stay at his home, which is down the street from a school.

"I go to truck stops, I go to rest areas, and that is where I sleep," Pollard said. "I am broke, and there are no other places in Hartford City to live that is not within 1,000 feet. They are throwing me clear out of the town."

Pollard was convicted of child solicitation in 1997. The law that forced him out of his house became effective Jan. 1. He was charged with a class C felony when the Blackford County Sheriff's Office found him still living there on Jan. 13.

"Every day they continue to live there is a violation of the law, and each day, they can receive an additional charge of up to 10 years in prison and a fine," said Blackford County Sheriff John Lancaster. "Since (Pollard) is not sleeping there anymore and continues to leave each day, he is not in violation."

Pollard said he didn't leave his home when he was supposed to because of the language in a letter he received on the subject. He said it was addressed "Dear Registered Sex Offender," so he thought it was a general notice given to all sex offenders, because his name was not stated.

"I didn't know that I was in violation of the law," he said. "I thought it was just informing me of the new law."

The Pollards have lived in their home 21 years. Pollard said being forced out of it now is like being penalized again for the same crime.

"I touched my granddaughter," Pollard said. "By the law I paid for my crime, but with my family, I will never pay for it."

Pollard said he spends the day at his house taking care of his diabetic wife, Caroline, who is currently in a wheelchair. He said his house "has a lot of memories," and he couldn't ask his wife to leave it.

"I am the one that did the crime," he said, "and my wife should not have to pay for what I did. But she is being made to, to be with me."

However, Pollard's neighbor, George Glawson, supports the law.

"He is still able to get around kids if he is there during the day, and he is the reason I don't let my son walk to school," Glawson said.

Lancaster, on the other hand, questions the effectiveness of a law that only regulates where a sex offender can sleep.

"They can stay there all day and they can't spend the night, so have we really regulated anything at all?" Lancaster said.

He added the department is depending on legislators to interpret the vagueness of what was passed. The sheriff also recognized Pollard's situation as a difficult one.

"He is stuck between a rock and a hard place," Lancaster said. "The downside to that is, the fact of the matter is he committed a crime against the child. And legislators passed the law, and we will enforce the law."

And for now, Pollard has to keep moving: "I am back on the road to look for my next stop, and I have to accept that is the way my life is."