



Our Voices, Our Votes—Making a Difference



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JESSICA'S LAW INITIATIVE



The Jessica Marie Lunsford Foundation
PO Box 4319 Homosassa Springs, FL 34429
Phone ~ 1.888.4jmlaw
www.jmlfoundation.com

Dear Federation Members:

Please allow this letter to serve as my deep expression of thanks for your efforts in supporting the national movement for Jessica's Law.

As many of you probably know, I have traveled throughout our country in support of strengthening child protection laws. In my view, our children are our most precious resource, and Jessica's Law is the most powerful tool that we have at our disposal to date to protect our children.

I lost my daughter because of weak sex offender laws. I never want another parent, brother, sister, grandparent or friend to go through what I have had to endure—"never again."

While some states have been quick to act in support of Jessica's Law, other states have not acted quickly enough, leaving loopholes in our system and a safe haven for absconders.

I strongly endorse the NFRW and their initiative in support of Jessica's Law. Together, we can all make a difference and provide a safer place for our children to live.

If I can be of any assistance with your efforts, please call upon me. I may be contacted at <http://www.jmlfoundation.com>.

Sincerely,

Mark Lunsford



Jessica's Law Initiative: An Initiative to Stop Child Predators

Many states have sexual predator laws that are simply not protecting our children. The National Federation of Republican Women would like your help in enacting laws that will keep our children safe. The best way to achieve this end is through an initiative named for Jessica Marie Lunsford, who was abducted and sexually assaulted before being brutally murdered. Jessica's Law refers to the Jessica Lunsford Act, passed in Florida, which mandates a minimum sentence of 25 years and a maximum of life in prison for first-time child sex offenders.

As research shows, child sex offenders repeat their crimes, and repetition of these crimes cannot be tolerated. Offenders abuse, rape and murder our precious children, and justice is hardly ever served. We cannot have these deviants on our streets threatening our children. The laws simply have to change.

Consider the following:

- In Rhode Island, 18-year-old Josh Maciorski was convicted of having sex with a 13-year-old girl, but was sentenced to probation. Two years later he molested a 14-year-old girl and served just one year. Then, when he got out, Maciorski raped a 16-year-old girl. His sentence after this third strike - an unbelievable three years in prison.
- In Missouri, 19-year old Darrell Jackson pleaded guilty to repeatedly sexually abusing a little girl, beginning when she was just eight. When Jackson came up for sentencing, a soft judge gave him four months in prison and five years probation.¹

These incidences and many more just like them could have been prevented, and this is why we need your help! Please utilize this booklet to help your state pass a version of Jessica's Law. This step-by-step guide will give you the necessary tools to ensure success. Our children are counting on you—the women of the National Federation of Republican Women—to get the job done.

Message from NFRW Legislative Chair Jessie Morton

As Chair of the NFRW Legislative Committee, I would like to stress the importance of checking to see if your state has passed, or is considering the passage of, Jessica's Law.

The original law was enacted in Florida in 2005. Many states have enacted versions of the law, and many others are considering it. Since Florida enacted Jessica's Law, Florida's repeat offender rate has dropped from 34 percent to 2 percent.

Nothing is more important than saving our children from these horrendous acts. As Republican women across this nation we can make sure each and every state passes this legislation. For this law to be effective and have continuity, it has to be passed nationwide.

It is time to contact governors and legislators and let them know how important this legislation is. Don't ask—demand that this legislation be passed.



RESEARCH

The Jessica Lunsford Act summary:

The Jessica Lunsford Act revises sexual predator criteria; requires twice yearly re-registration by sexual predators; provides criminal offenses for failing to re-register, failing to respond to address verification, failing to report or providing false information about sexual predators, and harboring or concealing a sexual predator; and requires electronic monitoring for certain offenders placed on conditional release.ⁱⁱ

What the law accomplishes:

1. Increases the penalty for lewd and lascivious molestation of a child to life in prison or a split sentence of a mandatory minimum 25-year prison term, followed by lifetime supervision with electronic monitoring.
2. Increases, from 20 to 30 years, the period of time before a sexual predator is allowed to petition to have the sexual predator designation removed.
3. Increases sexual predator/offender registration and reporting requirements.
4. Qualifies sexual predators who murder their victims for the death penalty in capital cases.
5. Designates failing to re-register as a sexual offender/predator or harboring or assisting a sexual predator/offender as a third-degree felony.
6. Requires those already convicted of sex crimes to have electronic monitoring for the remainder of their probation.
7. Requires all county misdemeanor probation officials to search the sexual offender registry when a new offender is assigned to them.ⁱⁱⁱ

Success by State Key:

Below you can see if your state has passed Jessica's Law or an equivalent, if your state is making progress or if your state needs to work harder in order to pass Jessica's Law or an equivalent.

States with Jessica's Law or an equivalent: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IA, IN, KY, LA, MD, MI, MO, MS, MT, ND, NE, NV, OH, OK, OR, RI, SC, TN, UT, VA, WI, and WV.

States making progress on the passage of Jessica's Law or an equivalent: KS, ME, MN, NH, NY, PA, SD, TX, and WA.

States that need to work harder to pass Jessica's Law or an equivalent: CO, HI, ID, IL, MA, NC, NJ, NM, VT, and WY.



ORGANIZE

Key Players

- NFRW Headquarters
- NFRW Executive Committee
- NFRW Legislative Committee
- The State Presidents
- The State Legislative Directors
- NFRW Clubs

Advocacy, simply put, is getting the message out in an organized manner. We must use our grassroots membership of nearly 100,000 women to make a great impact and get our voices heard. Using our advocacy skills will ensure that we promote our views with a concise message by using the appropriate communication tools in a professional and detailed manner.

As leaders of the organization you can make the difference. Below you will find directions for NFRW Headquarters, the NFRW Executive Committee, NFRW Legislative Committee, State Presidents, State Legislative Directors and NFRW Clubs. Remember, you are all key players in this initiative.

NFRW

- Each month NFRW will communicate with the Executive Committee members and the State Presidents to answer any questions and get up-to-date information. If you have any questions, The NFRW Political Director can be reached at political@nfrw.org or 1-800-373-9688.
- Periodically, NFRW will produce an e-newsletter devoted to the Jessica's Law Initiative that can be sent to your network. The e-newsletter will contain updates on progress being made throughout the U.S.

NFRW Executive Committee

- Your contact information will be provided to the key players, so that anyone who needs support or advice can call upon you.
- Check with State Presidents in your Region on a monthly basis to offer your advice and support.
- Report any developments to NFRW by e-mailing the Political Director at political@nfrw.org.

NFRW Legislative Committee

- Your contact information will be provided to the key players, so that anyone who needs support or advice can call upon you.
- Check with the NFRW Executive Committee on a monthly basis to see if there is more you can do to ensure the success of this initiative.
- Report any developments to NFRW by e-mailing the Political Director at political@nfrw.org.



State Presidents

- Your contact information will be provided to the key players, so that anyone who needs support or advice can call upon you.
- We recommend that you appoint a woman to become the Jessica's Law State Director, or ask your current State Legislative Director to take on this initiative. It is important that this person have the time, willingness and energy to complete the initiative. Once you have selected this individual, kindly e-mail her information to the NFRW Political Director at political@nfrw.org.
- Come up with a plan of action to accomplish this initiative. This manual will provide you with the tools necessary to create a successful plan.
- Report any developments to NFRW by e-mailing the Political Director at political@nfrw.org.

Jessica's Law State Directors or State Legislative Directors

- Help the State President develop a plan to accomplish this initiative. This manual will provide you with the tools necessary to create a successful plan.
- Once your plan is created, it is important to get all the clubs involved in this initiative. How you do this is up to you, but remember that there is power in numbers.
- Report any developments to NFRW by e-mailing the Political Director at political@nfrw.org.

NFRW Clubs

- Under the direction of the State President and the Legislative Director, clubs will participate according to the plan that was developed.

DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE

Key Players

NFRW Legislative Committee
The State Presidents
The State Legislative Directors

Developing your message is the most important part of the advocacy program. No matter what the activity, the messenger has only 45 seconds to state the main message for maximum attention and comprehension. In a letter, or any other written piece, the first sentence should contain the main message. The remainder of the discussion or document should support the main message.

The MAIN MESSAGE is a complete, simple declarative statement that you would make if that were all that you could say or write. It should encompass the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, AND HOW.

CRITERIA FOR THE MAIN MESSAGE:

- Grab attention.
- Introduce the topic.
- Stimulate interest.



THE MAIN MESSAGE SHOULD:

- State your objective.
- Imply the content that is to follow.
- Be compatible with the needs and interests of the organization.
- Be supportable.

Remember that the main message states the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW of the position. All information that follows the main message is support information: data, charts, graphs, quotes, references, examples and any other information that makes your position and that of the organization clear and impressive. Follow the rules discussed in each of the activities in the advocacy program and avoid any excess that makes your message too lengthy and hard to follow.

Tip—ALWAYS assume that what you say is “on the record.” NEVER assume that your words are “off the record,” and NEVER assume that you can talk “confidentially.”

GET YOUR MESSAGE TO YOUR MEMBERS

Key Players

- NFRW Executive Committee
- NFRW Legislative Committee
- The State Presidents
- The State Legislative Directors
- NFRW Clubs

Disseminating Information

It is important to ensure that legislative and advocacy-oriented information gets to your members as fast as possible. The legislative process can move quickly, and in order for your voice to be heard, you must be ready to act. Two of the quickest and easiest ways of getting information to your members are through newsletters and e-mail. A local club or state Federation newsletter is a great way to keep in touch with members, while keeping them apprised of legislative news and events. News flashes can be easily delivered by utilizing e-mail.

Utilizing Your Organization’s Newsletter

Use your monthly or quarterly newsletter to provide all of your members with legislative and advocacy updates. Ask your newsletter editor to reserve a special section of the newsletter for:

- Information on important bills being considered at the local, state and national levels
- Background material on issues and propositions
- Contact information of elected officials and local media
- Suggestions for legislative action, including topics for letters to the editor and talking points for radio call-in shows.

Information in the newsletter should be well-written and presented in an attractive, readable format. To minimize printing and mailing costs, your group may want to consider distributing the newsletter by e-mail.



ADVOCACY CORRESPONDENCE

Key Players

The State Presidents
The State Legislative Directors
NFRW Clubs

- The opening sentence, or a subject line, must indicate the specific issue of concern. For a subject line, place “SUBJECT: (issue to be discussed)” on the second line below the salutation. Name the exact legislation and use the bill number for identification (e.g., HB1234 or SB1234).
- Indicate that you are (if you are) a voting resident of the state or district when writing your legislators.
- Be sure that your letter is brief and to the point. Try to keep correspondence to one page or less and cover ONLY ONE ISSUE in a letter. (If your letter covers more than one issue, they will dilute one another.)
- Make sure you state exactly what you want your legislator to do, and ask for their support on the issue.
- Thank your legislator for taking the time to consider your views.
- Use personal stationery or your organization’s letterhead. You may attach a personal hand-written note to emphasize your concerns.
- Try to avoid form letters or signing onto a preprinted form (unless there is an organized campaign using postcards, where the volume of mail is the important outcome). Sample letters are provided in this document. However, please use the samples as guides to form your own original letter.
- To make your letter effective, you must make sure that the legislator, or their aide for the particular issue, sees and understands your message. **BE CERTAIN THAT YOU ARE USING THE CORRECT ADDRESS!**

Format for writing state legislators:

(The name of legislative bodies may differ from state to state.)

The Honorable (first and last name)
(Name of state) Senate
Address
Salutation: Dear Senator (last name)
For Leadership: Dear Mr./Madam Chairman/President/etc.

OR

The Honorable (first and last name)
(Name of state) House of Representatives
Address
Salutation: Dear Mr./Ms. (last name)
For Leadership: Dear Mr./Madam Chairman/Speaker/etc.



Sample Correspondence Letters:

Sample letters are provided as a reference. Please use the samples to form your own original letter.

Dear _____:

In order to keep child sex offenders at bay, our great state of _____ urgently needs to pass Jessica's Law to help ensure the safety of our children. This law mandates a 25-year minimum sentence for those convicted of child molestation and requires paroled child sex offenders to wear a GPS tracking system, allowing authorities to monitor these heinous criminals.

As research shows, child sex offenders repeat their crimes, and repetition of these crimes cannot be tolerated. This law will help thwart this horrible behavior by keeping those convicted off of the streets and by making these criminals truly pay for their wicked acts. By passing Jessica's Law, you will help protect innocent children.

Please consider this plea to keep our children safe. Thank you for your concern.

Sincerely,

Your name

Meeting Request Letter

Dear _____:

In order to keep child sex offenders at bay, our great state of _____ urgently needs to pass Jessica's Law to help ensure the safety of our children. This law mandates a 25-year minimum sentence for those convicted of child molestation and requires paroled child sex offenders to wear a GPS tracking system, allowing authorities to monitor these heinous criminals.

I respectfully request a meeting to discuss this matter. I am available to meet _____ (make sure to provide 2-3 options). This law will help thwart this horrible behavior by keeping those convicted off of the streets and by making these criminals truly pay for their wicked acts.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to meeting with you and working together to ensure that this legislation is passed.

Sincerely,

Your name



USE THE INTERNET TO GET YOUR MESSAGE DELIVERED

Key Players

NFRW Headquarters
NFRW Executive Committee
NFRW Legislative Committee
The State Presidents
The State Legislative Directors
NFRW Clubs

As more and more people access the Internet, online communication is rapidly becoming a key component of legislative advocacy. Through electronic communication (e-mail), you can quickly voice your opinion to legislators and gather support from others.

E-Mail:

E-mail is an inexpensive (a lot of sites offer free accounts), quick, and effective way to reach any number of legislators and potential supporters of your cause! It is quickly becoming an indispensable way of communicating. Use this communication tool to your advantage.

Developing an E-Mail Network:

- Develop an e-mail roster as an alternative to phone or fax.
- Include Federation members interested in legislative advocacy.
- Gather e-mail lists of elected officials. They should be separated by the level of office, such as local, county, state or national.
- Regularly update lists and ensure that addresses are correct.
- Regularly send e-mails, but not too many to flood the e-mail network. You want them to pay attention when you send an e-mail, not automatically trash it. Make your e-mails count!
Note: Remember to “blind copy” the e-mail addresses to keep your lists confidential.

SCHEDULE AN ADVOCACY VISIT

Key Players

The State Presidents
The State Legislative Directors
NFRW Clubs

- Always make appointments IN ADVANCE.
- Know the amount of TIME allotted for the meeting (10 to 15 minutes recommended).
- RECONFIRM the appointment with staff.
- BE PROMPT. (Early is better!)



- BE APPROPRIATELY DRESSED (business suit or tailored dress).
- KNOW YOUR MESSAGE AND HOW YOU WILL DELIVER IT. (You have 45 seconds to get your initial message across!)
- BE PREPARED.
- COMPILE a packet of information, including:
 - ★ A copy of the bill - even if you are calling on the author
 - ★ A list of legislators who support and who oppose the bill
 - ★ A list of other supporting organizations
 - ★ Briefing papers on the issue
 - ★ Position papers (include graphs, charts, photographs)
 - ★ Your business card.
- Limit conversation in the meeting to THE ISSUE.
- Terminate the visit ON TIME!
- FOLLOW UP PROMPTLY. Send thank you notes along with any further information to the legislator and staff.

TESTIFY BEFORE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES

Key Players

NFRW Legislative Committee
 The State Presidents
 The State Legislative Directors

- FOLLOW THE LEGISLATION: The State Legislative Director should closely follow the legislation in committee and subcommittee and monitor the schedule for meetings. The crossover of legislation from one body to the other should also be noted and their meeting schedules monitored.
- KEEP INFORMED OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Advocates on each of the issues being tracked should be kept informed of the meetings that are open and be prepared to testify regarding your position. Be sure you or your advocate are aware of the rules for testimony and that you have met all of the requirements.
- KNOW THE PROPER PROTOCOL AND SALUTATIONS: Committee rules and procedures for giving testimony should be followed at all times.
- BE PROMPT AND BE PREPARED.
- BE APPROPRIATELY DRESSED: Wear a business suit or tailored dress.
- SPEAK CLEARLY AND STATE YOUR PURPOSE: Remember, you have 45 seconds! State why you are involved and identify yourself. Relate any personal expertise or credentials that may be influential. Use a normal speaking voice and do not lecture. Do not become angry and attack, and avoid argument. Use common sense and good judgment.



- **KNOW THE ISSUE:** Know all sides of the issue, but **ONLY** speak to the position that you are advocating. Give a brief supporting summary of your position. (3-5 minutes are usually allowed.)
- **DISTRIBUTE YOUR TESTIMONY:** Prepare a written summary of the testimony and include supporting data, graphs, charts and photographs. Know beforehand the number of copies needed. Be sure to include your name, address, phone, fax, and e-mail address.
- **BE APPRECIATIVE OF THE COMMITTEE'S TIME:** Thank the committee or subcommittee and offer to answer questions or provide further information.
- **FOLLOW UP PROMPTLY:** Write thank you notes and be sure to send any follow-up information to the chair and staff.

TIPS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

- If you hear yourself say: "I feel this is a bad bill...." **STOP!** Who cares how you feel?
INSTEAD: "This is a bad bill because...."
- Be prepared to answer, "Why are people opposed to this bill?" Don't get caught up in discussions on the personality of the opposing people.
- Testify in a calm, rational way. Don't lecture. Don't threaten or be adversarial. Don't be strident. Stick with the issue. Don't politicize the issue. Avoid mandates. This will guarantee that the legislator will try to avoid you in the future if at all possible.
- Advocates are most impressive when they are knowledgeable and state the current situation, the problem, and the solution concisely. Work with the legislators ahead of time if possible.
- By testifying before a committee or meeting with legislators, you humanize the issue.
- Be concise. Photographs really can replace 1,000 words. Charts and graphs give credibility, particularly when women use them.
- Make friends. Friends are those who work with you, regardless of Party affiliation or whether they are liberal, moderate or conservative.
- Do not make enemies. Even if someone opposes you on a particular issue, you could conceivably need them in the future.
- Do not waste time and effort on a legislator who is committed to the opposition. Better to spend the time and energy on uncommitted legislators.
- Appreciate and thank those who help you. It will make it easier in the future.
- If your advocacy concerns a particular bill, refer to it by number and be sure to state your position and what you want the legislator to do.
- An advocate from a home district receives top priority. Paid lobbyists are fine, but we all know that their opinions are bought. A letter or communication from a district club member means a lot more to a legislator than a letter from National Headquarters.





CLOSING MESSAGE FROM THE NFRW PRESIDENT

Ladies, are you ready to hit the ground running? Great, because at the 2006 Spring Board Meeting the Board of Directors unanimously adopted a resolution stating:

WHEREAS, The National Federation of Republican Women recognizes that our children are at risk from sex offenders in our communities:

WHEREAS, We do not feel the penalties in some of our states are severe enough, and are allowing these predators back into our neighborhoods to repeat their offenses; and

WHEREAS, Some states are sponsoring bills which call for more severe penalties, such as life imprisonment, to those over 17 who have sexually assaulted children under 13;

RESOLVED, That the National Federation of Republican Women will be an advocate for passing such laws in our respective states for the protection of our children and call upon our states' parents, families, schools, and communities to assist in their endeavor.

This is an opportunity for us to make a real difference in our communities. This is a resolution to be acted upon as a Federation. For those states that have enacted a tough Jessica's law, vigilance is needed to be sure it stays in place. For those states yet to enact Jessica's Law, or a similar law, it is time to let our voices be heard for the safety of our children.

These are our children—they deserve to be protected. As women it is our obligation to make sure their protection is safeguarded. Those who prey upon those who cannot defend themselves should feel the full measure of the law. Now that you have read the contents of this manual, I ask you to join together to make this a safer place for our children by participating in this initiative.



Sample Club Flyer

This informational flyer can be distributed to a club when you have a plan of action that requires participation. It can be sent via e-mail or USPS mail. On the next page you will find a usable blank template. To get an electronic version, e-mail the NFRW Political Director at political@nfrw.org.

Jessica's Law Initiative: An Initiative to Stop Child Predators

The members of the (name of your state Federation) have joined with the National Federation of Republican Women to help change sexual predator laws throughout the United States of America. This initiative will help ensure that each state in the union has tougher laws that will prosecute these horrible offenders. In many states, sexual predator laws are simply not sufficient enough to protect our children. This is why we have started an initiative that aims to change legislation. This initiative was developed in memory of Jessica Marie Lunsford, who was abducted and sexually assaulted before being brutally murdered. Jessica's Law refers to the Jessica Lunsford Act passed in Florida which mandates a minimum sentence of 25 years and a maximum of life in prison for first-time child sex offenders.

What Jessica's Law will accomplish

The Jessica Lunsford Act revises sexual predator criteria; requires twice yearly re-registration by sexual predators; provides criminal offenses for failing to re-register, failing to respond to address verification, failing to report or providing false information about a sexual predator, and harboring or concealing a sexual predator; and requires electronic monitoring for certain offenders placed on conditional release.

The plan

(Insert the plan of action here, i.e., write letters to the editor, call talk radio, write to your Members of Congress, set up meetings with Members of Congress, etc.)

Additional information

(This area can be utilized for a news item or any other information that you think your members need to know.)

If you want to help or have any questions, please contact

(List contact information here.)



Jessica's Law Initiative: An Initiative to Stop Child Predators

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The plan

Additional information

If you want to help or have any questions, please contact



The printing of this program was made possible by NFRW Members. If you would like to contribute additional funds to this initiative, please call or e-mail the Political Director at 1-800-373-9688 or political@nfrw.org or mail a check to NFRW, 124 N. Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, Attention: Political Director.



Useful Website Links

<http://www.billoreilly.com/>

<http://www.e-copp.com/>

<http://www.jessicamarielunsford.com/>

http://www2.oprah.com/presents/2005/predator/predator_main.jhtml

<http://www.klaaskids.org/>

<http://www.lrcf.org/>

<http://www.sexualoffenders.com/?e=88>

Sources:

ⁱ<http://www.billoreilly.com/>

ⁱⁱ<http://www.flsenate.gov/>

ⁱⁱⁱ<http://www.jessicamarielunsford.com/>



