

April 17, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to endorse the work of Dr. Marshall Burns. His unprecedented work on Consenting Juveniles is a vital addition to the literature. This is an area of study in which few will engage and I admire his willingness to do so.

I am an assistant professor of criminal justice at the University of Washington, Tacoma. For the better part of a decade I have been engaged in research on sex offender registries, post-sentencing management policies for those convicted of perpetrating sexual harm, and the nature, context, and extent of sexual victimization. What I have learned from this work is that a moral panic regarding sexual harm has ensued for more than twenty years. Clearly, many individuals who fall under the purview of certain criminal justice sanctions have caused significant harm to survivors of sexual violence. However, many individuals, whose behaviors have not caused harm, and in many cases is 100% consensual, have been ensnared in policies that were never intended for them. Moreover, the fact that these individuals have been sanctioned as criminals causes more actual harm than the perceived harm caused by their behavior. Many of the juveniles Dr. Burns interviews are considered to be "abused children". However, he details the fact that these juveniles feel abused only by the very systems and networks who have labeled them as such.

The work that Dr. Burns is doing puts a face and a voice to a topic that is timely, necessary, and, too often, ignored. This work will certainly be considered controversial by some, but that should not distract anyone from the understanding that it an incredibly important addition to the field.

Respectfully submitted,



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