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PENNSYLVANIA, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS LATEST OF 55 JURISDICTIONS TO SUBSTANTIALLY IMPLEMENT PROVISIONS OF THE ADAM WALSH ACT

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department’s Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART) recently announced that Pennsylvania and the U.S. Virgin Islands are the latest jurisdictions to implement the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA), Title I of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006.

Since the passage of SORNA, which establishes a comprehensive national system for the registration of sex offenders, a total of 16 states, three territories and 36 tribes have met the requirements for implementation. The Act is named in memory of Adam Walsh, a 6-year-old boy, who was abducted from a mall in Hollywood, Fla. on July 27, 1981.

In addition to Pennsylvania and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the states of Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wyoming, and the United States territories of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, have also substantially implemented SORNA.

“We are encouraged by the efforts of so many jurisdictions to implement SORNA’s requirements, and we commend those that have substantially implemented the Act,” said Linda Baldwin, Director of the SMART Office. “We are also encouraged that the vast majority of jurisdictions are committed to exchanging information in a manner that will lead to improved monitoring and tracking of sex offenders across the United States and abroad.”

States and territories had until July 27, 2011, to substantially implement SORNA. Beginning in 2012, those that did not were subject to a 10-percent reduction in their Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Byrne (JAG) award. The penalty will continue to be applied on an annual basis until a state or territory substantially implements SORNA.

“Fortunately, withheld JAG funding can be reallocated back to states and territories if these funds are applied toward SORNA implementation activities,” added Director Baldwin. “In 2012, all but five jurisdictions (Arizona, Arkansas, California, Nebraska, and Texas) requested reallocation of their SORNA penalty to continue SORNA implementation efforts and we are pleased to announce that we have granted all of the reallocation requests received.”

Thirty-six federally recognized tribes have also substantially implemented SORNA’s requirements. The inclusion of tribal lands into the existing national system of sex offender registries was designed to eliminate safe havens where convicted sex offenders could avoid monitoring and registration. The tribes are: Bay Mills Indian Community, Bois Forte Band of

Chippewa, Cherokee Nation, Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, Comanche Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Fort McDowell Yavapai Tribal Council, Gila River Indian Community, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Kaw Nation, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, Ohkay Owingeh, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Osage Nation, Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Pueblo of Acoma, Pueblo of Isleta, Sac & Fox of the Mississippi in Iowa (Meskwaki), Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Tohono O'odham Nation, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, and Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska.

Many more tribal systems are under review. Tribes that did not implement SORNA by the deadline and can show that they will be able to do so "within a reasonable amount of time," as determined by the Attorney General, were able to submit a request to the SMART Office for additional time to implement the Act.

SORNA requires jurisdictions to share information about sex offenders who are relocating between jurisdictions or are required to register in more than one jurisdiction. The Justice Department has developed an internet-based community easily accessible to registration officials that facilitates exchange of information about registered sex offenders between jurisdictions.

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