



NEWSLETTER
WINTER EDITION 2013

Virginia Sheriffs Back Tough New Laws Cracking Down on Sex Offenders in the Commonwealth



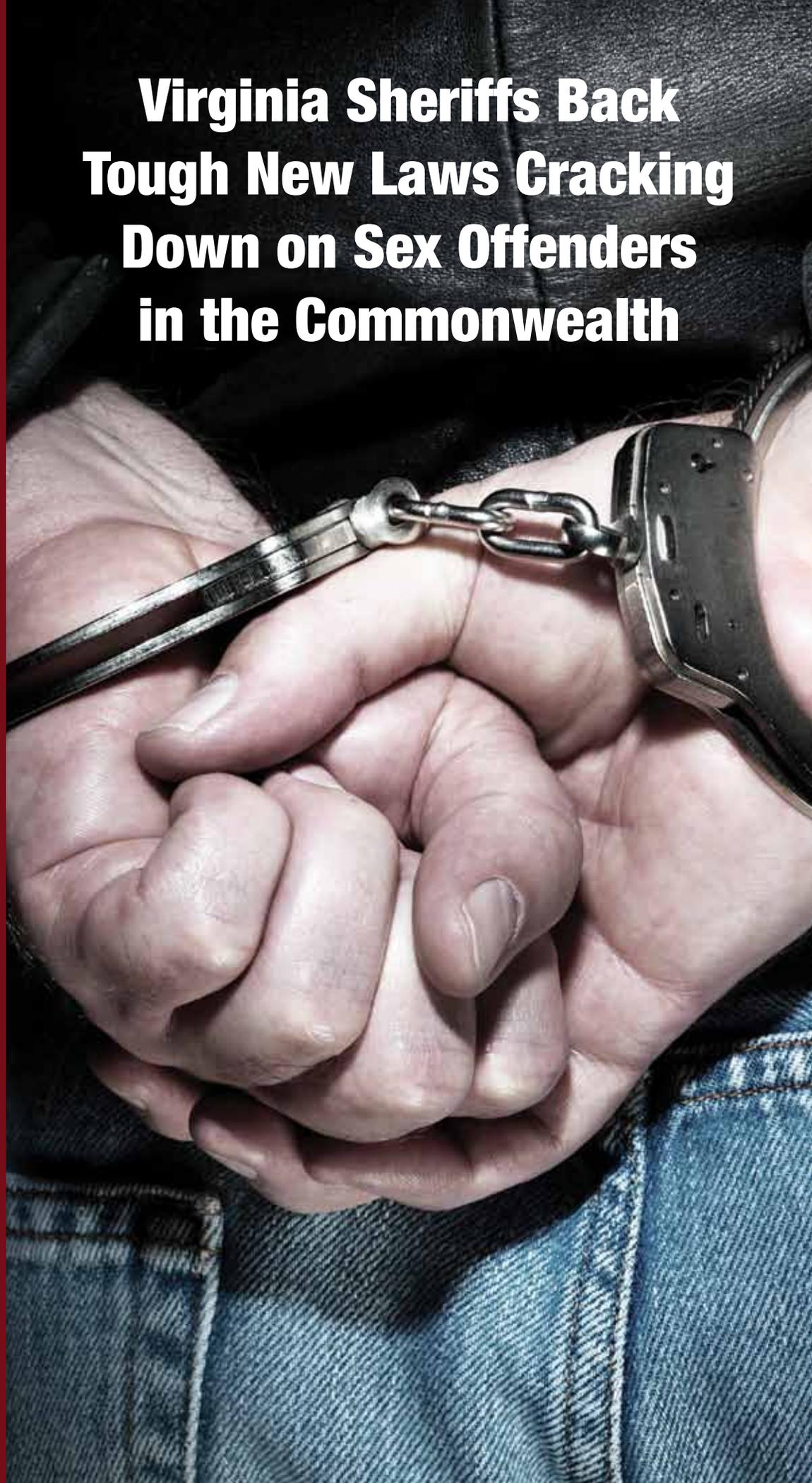
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2012-2013

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GOVERNOR MCDONNELL SIGNS "ONE STRIKE, YOU'RE OUT" LAW FOR PEDOPHILES

In September, Governor Bob McDonnell signed six bills to help fight sex crimes against children. The most severe law, House Bill 973, would impose a mandatory life sentence on an adult offender convicted of Virginia's most serious sex crimes, where the victim was a child aged 12 or under.

According to Governor McDonnell, "If you've got a problem, go get counseling and go get treatment because if you're caught and convicted it's one strike and you're out and you're going to go to jail for life because we have to protect the most vulnerable citizens in society."

Four of the six bills were patroned/co-patroned by Delegate Rob Bell, including House Bill 970, which was prompted by the recent scandal at Penn State University and requires that university employees report child abuse. House Bill 963 and House Bill 964 address



solicitation to create pornography and the display of explicit videos to children.

Over the last two years in Virginia there have been 228 adults convicted of these heinous crimes, and only 10 cases have resulted in life sentences. The median sentence for sex offenders prior to this law was 13 years. The Virginia Sheriffs support tough legislation targeting sex offenders who prey on children and believe these laws will help provide greater protection to victims of sexual abuse.

VSA PROMOTES LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES IN VA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In addition to fighting for tougher crime prevention and public safety laws in the 2013 VA General Assembly, the Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA) is calling on legislators to take up an important issue of compensation for Virginia's deputy sheriffs.

In Virginia, deputy sheriffs provide law enforcement, operate our jails and provide court services; which means they have some of the most dangerous jobs in law enforcement. They are also the most underpaid. In fact, hundreds of deputies and dispatchers live on near poverty levels and even qualify for low-income assistance through state and federal programs, though many are too embarrassed to apply for such services.

In addition to being the first to arrive at the scene of a crime, deputies transport violent criminals alone, they often respond to domestic and other disturbances alone, and are responsible for operating all local jails and maintaining court security in every court in the Commonwealth.

That's why VSA is calling on the General Assembly to make it a priority to address the salary level of deputy sheriffs, provide basic Worker's Compensation benefits for deputy sheriffs injured while performing public safety services and in the line of duty (currently these benefits are not provided), and increase Civil Liability insurance for Sheriffs.

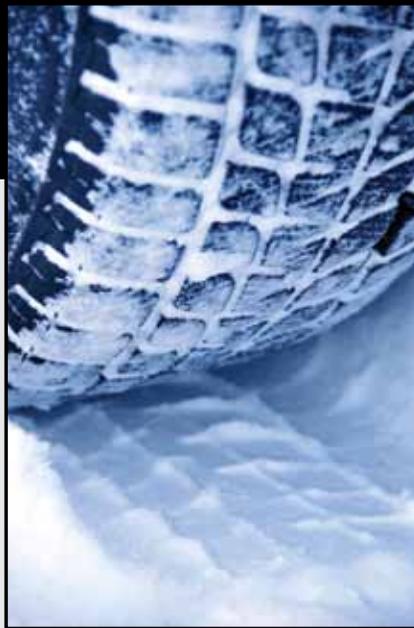
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Legislative Priorities
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VSA is encouraging all Virginia citizens, Sheriffs, and deputies to call their legislators and urge them to support tough crime prevention and public safety legislation, as well as critical pay raise legislation for deputy sheriffs in Virginia in the 2013 General Assembly.

WINTER DRIVING EMERGENCY KIT

- ✓ Ice scraper
- ✓ Flashlight
- ✓ Jumper cables
- ✓ Boots & Gloves
- ✓ Cell phone car charger
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Food/Snacks
- ✓ First Aid Kit
- ✓ Blanket



AVOIDING WINTER DRIVING HAZARDS

Most crashes that occur in winter are caused by motorists driving too fast for conditions.

Following the safety tips mentioned below will improve your winter driving skills and keep you and other motorists safe during snowy or icy conditions.

- Pay attention. Never try to outdrive the conditions.
- Clear ice and snow from all windows and lights — even the hood and roof— before driving.
- Leave plenty of room for stopping between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Know the current road conditions.
- Use brakes carefully. Brake early. Brake correctly. It takes more time to stop in adverse conditions. If your vehicle has an anti-lock braking system (ABS), keep your foot with even pressure on the brake pedal. If your vehicle does not have ABS, pump the pedal gently, pumping more rapidly only as your car slows down.
- Watch for slippery bridge decks. Bridge decks ice up sooner than adjacent pavement.
- If your car starts to skid, do not slam on the brakes. Steer the car in the direction of the skid and slowly apply brake pressure.

SHORTER DAYS, LONGER NIGHTS – STAY SAFE THIS WINTER!

January is National Crime Stoppers Month, so here are a few tips to help keep you and your family safe during these winter months.

With short days and long nights, darkness provides the perfect cover for criminals. That's why I urge you and other citizens in your community to keep your property well lit at night, and always keep your doors and windows locked.

When traveling to and from your home or work, remain vigilant at all times, especially when entering or exiting your vehicle or home. Never leave your vehicle running

while unattended. Tempting as it is to run back into the house while the engine warms up, you are creating an ideal situation for auto thieves out scouting for their opportunity.

While staying warm during these cold winter months is a necessity, ear muffs and snug hats can muffle noise, including someone walking too close to you. Never walk with your cell phone or other portable electronic device on display, as this will attract would-be thieves. Again, stay aware of your immediate surroundings, glance around often, and always walk with confidence.

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM VSI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOHN W. JONES



On behalf of all of us at the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, I hope you and your family are having a joyous and safe start to the New Year.

With the prospect of wintry conditions for the next several months, I urge you to take extra care and caution when traveling on Virginia's roadways. I've included some

tips on how to handle your car in icy conditions. I've also provided a list of items to include in your emergency kit that you should keep in your car in case you become stranded.

With your continued strong support VSI, will work to promote crime prevention and public safety efforts in your community and all across Virginia. At the same time, we are focused on bringing much-needed attention to improving the working conditions of our hardworking deputy sheriffs, and enhancing the criminal justice system to deal with the ever-increasing challenges faced by law enforcement, the courts, and correctional system.

To continue to be effective at combating crime, we need your help. That's why I'm asking you to report crimes and suspicious activity when you see them so that we can do our very best to keep Virginia a safe place to work, play, live, and raise our families.

As always, it is my privilege to serve as Executive Director of VSI. I deeply appreciate your involvement as a loyal supporter of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute and I look forward to working together with you in the New Year to help Virginia be all it can be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John W. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John W. Jones, Executive Director
Virginia Sheriffs' Institute

VIOLENT CRIME DOWN IN U.S.

For the fifth consecutive year, violent crime fell in the U.S., while urban crime continues to pose a significant problem for law enforcement officers across the country. Property crime also fell for the ninth year in a row.

Some criminologists cite a more settled crack cocaine market, an increase in incarcerations, an aging population, data-driven policing, and changes in technology that include a big increase in surveillance cameras as possible factors for the decline.

If you would like to read the latest information available for arrests by law enforcement agencies in Virginia for serious and less serious crimes, please go to <http://vasheriffsinstitute.org/public-resources/crime-reports/>.



Don't forget to Join Us on Facebook! — Where we'll will keep you updated on breaking news, including legislation that could impact law enforcement efforts in Virginia. And feel free to post your feedback on ways we can improve our programs that benefit Virginia Sheriffs, Deputies, and citizens like you.

We Want to Hear from You ...

Drop us a note, give us a call, or send us an email.



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The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute solicits articles and comments from associate members of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute for inclusion in this newsletter. Articles and comments should be directed to: John W. Jones, Executive Director, Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, 701 East Franklin Street, Suite 706, Richmond, VA 23219-2512, or phone (804) 225-7152.

The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute does not solicit donations by telephone.