



Q & A

Frequently Asked Questions about Online Dating Criminal Background Checks

How does this type of bill stop online predators from victimizing others?

These bills move in the right direction to better protect consumers by equipping them with important safety information not currently provided by the majority of online dating services. No one piece of legislation can prevent predators from getting online and trying to victimize others, but we can build a safer, more informed consumer base to be cautious and protect honest-seeking individuals.

Is safer online dating legislation just the legislation of a business model?

No, this is legislation to improve the public safety of online dating consumers.

Why can't we allow the marketplace to make these services available naturally?

The marketplace is ALREADY demanding increased security. This just assures that consumers receive full disclosure.

What do you say to those that say this legislation will make online dating less safe by creating a false sense of security?

This legislation requires disclosure of background checks, and establishes that they are not foolproof. We believe some screening is better than no screening at all.

What if someone has not been found guilty of a crime, but is a sexual predator nonetheless? They will be able to infiltrate the system.

Legislation will not stop all sexual predators, but it will block those who are already convicted sexual predator felons. We believe some screening is better than no screening at all.

Will this make online dating more expensive?

This industry is currently enjoying high margins and can easily absorb the minimal added cost of providing criminal screening for its members. By way of example, the Little League pays only \$1.50 per background search.



I keep hearing that this is a special interest bill. What about it makes it a special interest bill?

There is nothing “special interest” about better protecting people from felons and sexual predators. The world takes all kinds, but online dating services should clearly disclose whether or not they provide safety-enhancing background checks.

Isn't this a national issue? Shouldn't Congress be dealing with it?

The issue of Internet dating is specific to the industry. It requires specific legislation, but thus far, Congress has not acted. In the meantime, the single people in each state are in danger. State legislators should not rely on Congress to protect the citizens of their state.

But if each state passes its own version of the bill, might there be conflicts?

Many States have enacted laws dealing with common subject matter without significant conflict. Examples include SPAM legislation and other consumer protection laws. We have developed a model bill that is designed to increase safety while also allowing flexibility throughout the States.

What research do you have to support criminal background screening for online dating at a national level?

Russell Research conducted a national survey of registered voters, which determined that there was significant support for the legislation. Specifically, 77% of registered voters would support urgent passing of state legislation that makes it a requirement for online dating sites to prescreen members against criminal databases. Moreover, 83% of female registered voters would support the same legislation.

How will you be able to guarantee that the background check is done on the actual person who's applying for membership?

With any crime prevention measure there will be some individuals that attempt to circumvent even the most sophisticated search and verification technology. Identity theft may fall through the cracks. However, the greater good is served by instituting as many safeguards as possible to protect the general public.

Pertaining to individuals with the same name, how do you know that the “John Smith” without the conviction does not come up as the “John Smith” who is a convicted felon, or vice versa?

The background checks are linked to more than someone's name so their accuracy rate is very high. For instance, credit card verification, shown on a credit card statement as a zero charge, could be a solution, depending on how the legislation is written.