Thank you, Oliver Bell, for that introduction and thank all of you for being here today to discuss an unpleasant reality in our society.

Sexual assault is a crime of opportunity whose perpetrators are among the most calculating and deliberate of criminals.

Victims of sexual assault suffer grievous bodily injuries that can take weeks or even months to heal while the damage done to their spirit and soul can last much, much longer.
We are here today to announce initiatives that will provide greater protections to our citizens when it comes to these unspeakable crimes.

Three years ago, I had the honor of signing “Jessica’s Law” empowering juries to sentence those that commit the most vicious crimes against the most vulnerable victims to jail for the rest of their lives without the possibility of parole.

Today, I’m calling on the Legislature to expand the number of sexual assault crimes punishable by life without parole beyond those perpetrated against children giving juries the authority to send the most dangerous of these felons away for good.

The worst of the worst predators should not have the freedom to destroy lives again.

Such a change would send a clear message to all would be sexual predators that if you’re thinking about attacking someone in Texas you’d best think again.

Such a change would be the latest step in our ongoing efforts to minimize the danger posed by sexual predators.

Earlier this year, the Criminal Justice Division in my office granted $500,000 to fund the Ten Most Wanted Sex Offender program which increases awareness of at-large sex offenders and rewards citizens who provide tips leading to their capture. The results have been significant and rapid with six of the top 10 brought to justice within the program’s first two and a half months including one just last week.

As long as even one of these individuals remains at large, however, our work is far from over.

To that end, I am calling upon the Department of Public Safety and Department of Criminal Justice to work with the Attorney General’s Office and local law enforcement officials to form Apprehension Teams to target those sex offenders in violation of their parole.

Although the various law enforcement entities in our state already work hard to corral these folks this team approach will improve cooperation and communication and up the odds of their apprehension.

I’m also directing DPS to continue efforts to enter into reciprocal agreements with other states expanding the sharing of registry information so convicted sex assailants will be unable to game the system and avoid registering with local authorities or hide out from outstanding warrants.

These steps will make it harder for sexual predators to melt into the background and remain at large.

In good conscience, we can’t rest until we have all of these miscreants back in front of a judge or back in jail.

To cut down on the incidents of parole violators and ensure that sex offenders are complying fully with the terms of their release or parole we should also expand the use of technology to actively track them.

Today, I am directing the TDCJ Parole Division to work with the Board of Pardons and Paroles to expand the use of their monitoring systems that can immediately identify when a paroled sex offender is somewhere they’re not supposed to be say, within a certain distance of a school or a specific individual.

Under my directive, not just some, but all sex offenders currently under supervision rated as “high risk” shall be actively tracked to make sure they’re living up to the terms of their release.

I’m also calling upon the legislature to require active tracking of all “high risk” sex offenders for a period of three years after they’ve served their sentences ensuring they comply with registration requirements.

The legislature should also require such active monitoring be a part of all sentences handed down to all high risk sex
offenders in the future.

These steps can help cut down on the opportunities presented to those who want to prey upon their fellow citizens serving as a deterrent in the process.

Put simply, in Texas, sexual predators will pay the price for their crimes no matter how hard they try to avoid it.

Now, I’d like to introduce a legislator who has been a leader in our state’s efforts to reduce sexual assault and care for its victims. Representative Senfronia Thompson? Representative

Thank you, Clete and thank you for your leadership of the Attorney General’s enforcement efforts on this difficult issue.