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Alabama Has Highest Rate Of Teacher-Student Sex Abuse: Study

The Huffington Post | By [Andy Campbell](#) ([/andy-campbell/](#)) ([/use/https://twitter.com/AndyBCampbell](https://twitter.com/AndyBCampbell))

Posted: 01/15/2015 1:56 pm EST | Updated: 01/15/2015 2:59 pm EST

Alabama school employees were implicated in more sex crimes with students than any other state in 2014, according to a new study.

Terry Abbott, the former chief of staff for the U.S. Department of Education who conducted the study, found that 25 Alabama educators were accused or convicted of having sexual relations with students last year, [according to the Alabama Media Group](http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2015/01/alabama_worst_in_the_nation_for_teacher_student_sex_abuse.html#incart_m-rpt-2) (http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2015/01/alabama_worst_in_the_nation_for_teacher_student_sex_abuse.html#incart_m-rpt-2). Some states had more incidents, but on a per capita basis, Alabama has the highest rate of teacher-student sex abuse.

To be sure, the law varies state to state and there is no federal law that serves as an umbrella for such cases, which might skew Abbott's numbers a bit. The Alabama Media Group reports:

Alabama Act 2010-497 makes it illegal for any school employee to have a sexual relationship with a student younger than 19. In Wyoming, as long as the student is 16 or older and consents to the relationship, it's not a crime. In Michigan, all such relationships are illegal, regardless of the student's age.

Abbott and other advocates have lobbied for more uniform laws and sentencing guidelines nationwide, but until such legislation is adopted, there's always going to be some disparity, he said.

"In some cases, educators are committing heinous crimes involving children throughout the country and getting very little, if any, real punishment for it. You turn around and find a similar case in another state and find the judicial system has thrown the book at the educator," Abbott said Tuesday.

Texas saw the most cases with 116 accusations out of the 781 that Abbott and his PR firm, Drive West Communications, counted across the country, the [New York Daily News](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/alabama-highest-rate-teacher-student-sex-study-article-1.2078895) reports (<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/alabama-highest-rate-teacher-student-sex-study-article-1.2078895>). But Alabama's lower population means it has a higher rate of such cases.

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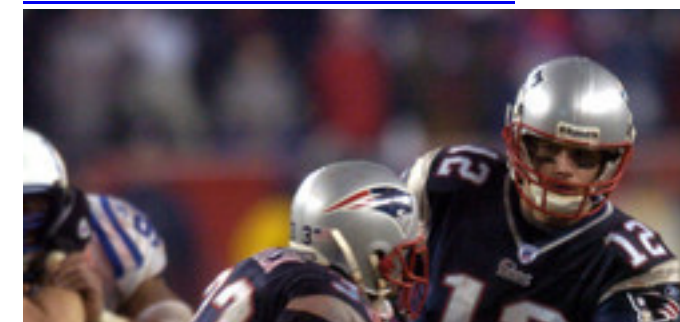
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Some of those cases last year made national headlines. [Alicia Gray, for example](#)



(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/14/alicia-gray-teacher-sex-apology_n_4594683.html), recorded and released a video apology after pleading guilty to charges that she had sex with a 14-year-old student. The 28-year-old math teacher took a plea deal last January and was sentenced to six months in jail and five years probation.



And just days ago, Jessica Acker, 23, resigned from her teaching role in Tuscaloosa after officials learned of her [alleged sexual relationship with an 18-year-old male](#)

(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/12/teacher-sex-alabama_n_6456282.html). She was charged with engaging in a sex act with a student under the age of 19.

Though some in Alabama reportedly disagree with the stricter age rules on teachers and students, Abbott says it's an issue of trust.

"I want my grandchildren, one of these days, to be safe in Alabama's classrooms," he said. "I think we have to be aware that, as many great teachers as there are in Alabama, we've seen that there are still sexual predators in our classrooms, preying on our children."

Thirty-five percent of the cases involved social media in some way, and Abbott told the Daily News that women are more likely to "lure students" via social media. That said, male educators were involved in double the number of inappropriate relationships than female teachers.

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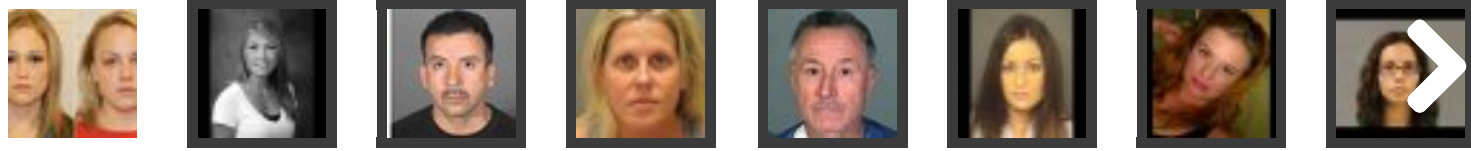
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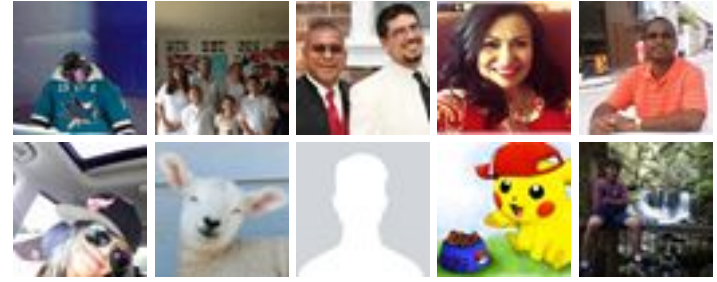
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call it what it is lunch time pick your entree hahahahaha

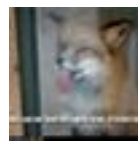
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Birinderjit Dhillon · ★ Top Commenter

That's prolly all the edumacation theys gonna git! Lemme guess...they're pushing abstinence?

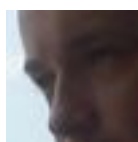
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James Kessler · ★ Top Commenter

oh you can bet your bottom dollar on that.

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Vitalik Osborne · ★ Top Commenter · Dallas, Texas

Good ole 'Bama. Number one!

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Rob Harr · ★ Top Commenter

Third most "Christian" state in the US... Guess we need more god in school, eh?

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Ben Williamson · ★ Top Commenter

Yes! We're not dead last in something! We're number ONE! We're number ONE! This makes me as excited as when were named first in infant mortality!

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Kate Gallagher · ★ Top Commenter · Works at Self-Employed

Big surprise, look at who the governor is.

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Sherrie Allen · ★ Top Commenter · Central Ohio Technical College

well i came to make a joke about inbreeding, but it looks like i'm late to the party so i'm just gonna go ahead and like everybody's comments.

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Bud Esper · ★ Top Commenter · Trinity College and Theological Seminary

Must be all that southern Christian evangelism influence. So much preachin' and communicating must work up a powerful sexual appetite.

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Tony Collins · ★ Top Commenter

If relatives arent off limits in alabama why would you expect students to be.

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