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## No easy answers

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# No easy answers

Searching for a method to effectively punish sex crime offenders, at least three judges have recently ordered convicted rapists and child molesters to take a drug that causes chemical castration in lieu of regular prison sentences.

The drug, Depo-Provera, decreases the male sex drive by suppressing the hormone testosterone, thus causing a loss in the urge to commit sexual crime, researchers say. At regulated doses, it cuts down a man's sexual aggressiveness without making him impotent.

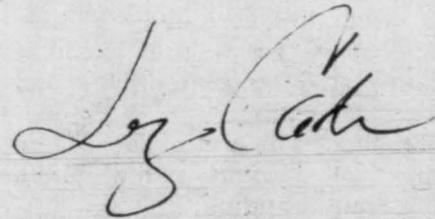
This form of punishment only perpetuates the myth that rape and many other crimes involving sexual acts are "sex crimes." Rape, while committed through sexual means, is a crime of violence. Through castration through chemical means may in fact reduce potential sexual aggressiveness, it will not reduce potential violent tendencies. Thus a man could be free to commit other tragic violent crimes.

Chemical castration also violates the Eighth Amendment, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. Castration is not comparable to a death sentence or life imprisonment. To castrate a man is to maim him. Following this "eye for an eye" precedent, the next logical step would be

to cut off the hands of a thief or to poke out the eye of a Peeping Tom. And what if a man found guilty of rape is later acquitted? If he is castrated, his punishment for a crime he didn't commit never ends.

Then there is the so-called "scare tactic"—that a man would think twice before committing a rape if he realized the threat of castration as punishment. Compare this to the threat of capital punishment as a deterrent for murder, then look at the growing numbers of prisoners on death row. It just doesn't wash.

No drug, not even Depo-Provera, can "cure" sex offenders or rapists. As Laurie Robinson, staff director of the American Bar Association's criminal justice section said, chemical castration treats the symptom, not the cause.



EX-PEEPING TOM?

EX-THIEF?

EX-SEX CRIMINAL?

