

**To: Michigan House of Representatives Judiciary Committee
Michigan Senate Judiciary Committee
Michigan Governor Whitmore**

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Comment on Draft 4 of HB 5679

I have thoroughly read the proposed changes to the Michigan SORA requirements as presented in Draft 4 of HB-5679. As the girlfriend and family member of a person who is required to register I have grave concerns about how this bill will further negatively impact both the registrant and their loved ones.

Registries do not prevent crime or improve public safety. Many times they contribute to additional crimes. When people are forced to remain in an “invisible prison” as the public registry does, it forces them into unemployment, homelessness and finally desperation. It also forces their loved ones into the same situation: kids are tormented at school, wives/girlfriends are followed and verbally abused, (maybe even attacked) and property damage and shunning in neighborhoods is not uncommon. Once my loved one returns, I'll be forced to chose between him and my home. This is CRUEL and does nothing to re-build families.

In the United States of America, the law states that once someone has completed their sentence, their debt to society has been paid. It DOES NOT say that after you are freed the government can continue to punish you for life. *The sex offender registries are lifetime punishment* and are out of control. Recidivism for sex offenders is 3-5%. Registries are chasing a problem that does not exist.

No other crime is forced to report and have all of their information publically available so people can know who, where, how to contact, follow and torment them and their families.

Murder, drug crimes, property crimes ...name the crime... felons are not on a public list. Each of the aforementioned crimes has exponentially higher recidivism rates (greater than 60%) than sex offenders. Yet persons convicted of murder, drug crimes or property crimes are afforded the opportunity to turn their life around. They can re-engage with their family at home, they can secure gainful & meaningful employment... everything that should be afforded to all formerly incarcerated individuals... INCLUDING sex offenders. How do you rebuild your life IF you are constantly being asked to re-live your worst day?

If registries actually improved public safety, then sex crimes would have been eliminated by now. The truth is registries DO NOT. Most sex crimes are not

committed by people on the registry, but by people that law enforcement is not even aware of.

Study after study has shown proper counseling services, family reintegration, and the opportunity to have gainful employment to provide for their families is what PREVENTS crime and most especially recidivism. The money to create, maintain, track and follow the registry would be better spent providing the programming needed, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), to insure that persons grow and become well rounded citizens. Not hindered by the registry and its crippling punitive results.

There are several things that should be eliminated/corrected in Draft 4 of HB-5679 that significantly impact the families of registrants.

§ 8(2) [page 37, lines 12-17]: *Public Internet Website* Allow only law enforcement and courts access to the registry. There is no need for this information to be viewed by the general public. Study after study has demonstrated the people on the registry are not re-offending. Open public view only hinders the progress toward a responsible citizen. Would you want all of your information posted for all to see and put your family at risk of vigilantes? This continues to allow friends and family members to be victimized.

§ 7(1)(e) [page 31, lines 7-11] & § 5(2)(b) [page 22, lines 3-4]: *Temporary Lodging* Providing this information if longer than 7-days away from registered address is un-realistic. The time period should be 14-days.

Many families are on opposite coasts. With airline travel health risky, travel by auto will most likely be the best way to visit. It is impossible to drive across the country, visit and drive back within 7-days.

Seven (7) days only serves to reduce the ability to build family ties. To be required to expose names, addresses, contact information of family & friends on a public registry continues to tear apart the ability for a registered person to build, improve, and maintain healthy positive relationships. Vacation time is generally two-weeks.

Family re-integration is key to successful transition from incarceration to productive citizen. Making family & friends part of the registry is counter-productive to the goal. It brings unnecessary conflict and puts everyone at risk. This is cruel punishment after being freed. Don't put kids, grandkids and families in the middle. Support the positive effort by letting all of us enjoy each other. Help build families and relationships, DO NOT continue to tear apart.

Addresses of friends / significant others should NOT be part of the registry requirements. It is WRONG to insist that INNOCENT PEOPLE get dragged onto the registry because they allow a registered person to visit. The resident address of the sex offender is known and is enough information.

§ 2(g) [page 5, lines 26-28 & page 21, lines 27-28]: *Internet Identifiers* This is impossible to report accurately and requirement should be removed. Many persons use “Hot-Spot” routings off their cell phone or other Wi-Fi enabled device that have various IP addresses dependent upon what is “available” at the connection time. This requirement puts additional, non-value added strain on families.

Additional Improvements to Draft 4 of HB 5679

Reduction Tier registry reduction opportunities should be available for all levels with maximum time on a law enforcement only registry of 5-years. At two-year intervals, registrant may present documentation demonstrating necessary improvements to be removed from the registry.

Levels should only be assigned by mental health diagnosis. The most stringent (Tier III- Life) should be reserved for rape, child molestation and pedophilia crimes. All others should be allowed and encouraged to re-build their lives with loved ones. Personally, I eagerly await the call to go pick-up my loved one and start to rebuild our life together. Allow this to progress free of the external encumbrances of a public registry.

Multiple studies show registries do not improve public safety; registries do not decrease recidivism rates and certainly do not help people rebuild their lives. The registry HINDERS both the person required to register as well as their family unit. It is way past time to begin to help these individuals be successful responsible citizens.

Wouldn't it be more beneficial for everyone to have people become productive citizens, get decent jobs and pay taxes?

The draft 4 version of HB 5679 needs further revision and should not move forward out of committee until corrected. Put yourself in the registrant and their families shoes... Build up, don't tear down. Think about how you would want to be treated after working hard to turn your life around only to see your family tormented by making public information that really is nobody's business!

This needs further work... form a task force, I'm willing to serve. Lets work together to set the registrants up for success and protect their families! We just want our lives back.

Kathy L.
27 November 2020