

Melissa Sweet

From: scott linton <scottlnt57@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2020 1:57 PM
To: Melissa Sweet
Subject: URGENT SOR HB5679

This bill, HB 5679, is scheduled for a hearing on May 6. This should not happen during a pandemic. It will have a terrible effect on thousands of Michigan citizens. There should be adequate opportunity for the public to testify; however, due to the Governor's Stay at Home order, no one can come and speak. This process needs to slow down because as it is written, it does not include changes to the SOR to remove Juvenile offenders and persons with no criminal record.

To Rep Melissa Sweet,

My name is Scott Linton, I am 29 years old. I currently work in a fast-paced IT industry and support 16,000 users. I currently live in Brandon Township. I am married to my wife Daniella, and we are the proud parents of a new beautiful baby girl as of two weeks ago. I am writing to you today to encourage you to change the sex offender registry so it does not include juvenile offenders. I have been on the registry since I was adjudicated at age 14. My victim was a family member. I have no other offenses on my record. Being on the registry has made life very difficult for me, my family, and even my friends.

When I was in high school the challenges of attending football games, after school activities, family events all caused great concern and worries. During my senior year of high school my registry information went on the public website when I turned 18. As a result, people judged me as a terrible person, stopped talking to me, and even threaten me. At the time, I thought this was really bad, but as an adult the challenges are even greater even though my registration information was made non-public in 2011. Being on the registry has made me change my career choice multiple times, as I was told that no one would hire me because they assumed that I was a risk to others. Registration has put me in emotionally challenging situations in which I'm depressed, frustrated, and at times not wanting to live anymore. The registry has not helped me become a better person, but keeps me in fear and perpetually reminds me that I am a terrible person even though I am not.

The label and registration requirements are stifling. I want to be able to provide for my family, but I am afraid that everything I have worked hard for will be taken away from us if I make one registration mistake, even though I try very hard not to; forgetting to register on time every three months; updating vehicle licenses, phone numbers, and email addresses used regularly; updating residence, employer, and school changes; and updating when I travel and where I am going both in and out of state. These are just a few things I must constantly think about. Honestly, remembering all the requirements is emotionally exhausting.

I was, and am, afraid to have children, worrying about how difficult it will be to attend their school events and after-school activities. I want a big family; I want to be a hands-on dad that supports my wife and children's activities; I want to provide for them; I want to create amazing memories for them on family vacations; but I am worried that this will be too difficult, and at the drop of a hat I could lose everything due to this sex offender label placed on me at 14 years old. It holds me back from achieving so much more in life. I am a very hard worker, and dedicated to my work and family, but live in fear that my employer or a coworker will find out, and that I will lose my job.

The stigma of being labeled a sex offender blinds people from seeing me for who I truly am; someone undeserving of this label and these requirements. Words cannot adequately express how immensely painful and frustrating this is.

I strongly urge that this law be rewritten. Juvenile offenders should be removed from the list. I understand that this law was well intentioned, but it has created irrational fear by the public while detrimentally affecting offenders such as myself. It creates a life of depression, struggle and in some cases suicide. I am asking you to understand that there are good people on the list that are not a risk to the public that deserve to be removed. The person I am, and the research on juvenile sexual behavior proves our registry should not include juvenile offenders. Yet, as a juvenile my name was placed side-by-side on the registry next to the worst of the worst. I try to keep a positive outlook, and hope and pray that law makers will understand the hardship, see the struggle, recognize the injustice of this, and take action to correct this.

Thank you for taking time to read my story and understand that I have 15 years of pain and fear that I cannot possibly fit on one or two pages of paper.

Sincerely,

Scott Linton

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This is impacting my life, my child's life. I was 14 in 2005 when I was placed on the SOR for life.

PLEASE remove juveniles.

Scott G. Linton
Network support Engineer