

**I am Submitting Written Testimony to the Members of the Michigan House Judiciary Committee
Regarding Major Revisions to the Michigan Sex Offender Registry Hearing HB 5679**

May 13, 2020

It has been 17 years since my son was sentenced as a Tier II offender second degree csc MCL750.520c (Wayne County) for having an improper relationship with an underage girl and was sentenced on May 29, 2003 to serve three years' probation, register four times a year for the next 25 years (has since been reduced to twice a year) as a sexual offender, required to report any change of address to the police, and is pictured on the national sex offender registry. He also paid in full fines, court costs, and attorney fees.

There was a time when only law enforcement had access to the registry but the fact that his picture, name and address have been listed on the Michigan National Sex Offender Registry as a Tier II offender for the world to see causes our family great anguish and fear for his safety. It is difficult to be hired for full time employment as employers do not want a felon sex offender in their employ. Many of our family members, friends, and neighbors no longer associate with us and consider us pariahs – especially those that have children. We've been living with the stigma that a sex offender carries for 17 years. Not only his, but our lives have been altered forever.

There is much more than loss of reputation of the registrant -- being listed on the registry puts a target on their back which promotes violence, vigilantism, harassment, vandalism, removes all chances of securing employment, severely restricts freedom of movement, afraid to travel out of the United States, cannot work near children, near schools, puts their families in harm's way, labels them a predator, a pariah to society and brands them with a scarlet letter -- basically, a ruined life. **Let's not go back to the laws of the 17th century.**

My son occasionally finds work in construction but he is not able to work on or near school property during school renovations or new construction – more lost wages and unable to purchase a home or rent near schools.

Not all police stations process a registrants' registration requirements in person. At times, the registration website is down and creates more anxiety as the penalty for not registering in a timely manner is arrest and jail.

We were planning a family trip to Mexico for a friend's wedding and reunion but discovered my son will not be allowed into the country. We have canceled the trip entirely. However, some ex convicts and other felons do not have these restrictions and can travel wherever they want. He won't be able to travel to other countries for fear that he will be taken into police custody upon arrival or soon thereafter. We have lived in an emotional prison for the past 17 years and will be labeled for the rest of our lives.

There are many men sitting in jail right now because girls who want to get involved with men lie about their age or want revenge on men that may have slighted or deceived them in some way. Should someone who urinates outside on or near a building be put on the sex offender registry? That has happened!

Where is the national registry for convicts who are released from prison?

Where is the national registry for those who have caused injuries and fatalities from driving while drunk or high on drugs?

Where is the national registry for convicted drug dealers?

Where is the national registry for those convicted of domestic violence, assault with intent to murder and armed robbery?

Aren't all of the above a danger to society? Why do only people with sex related crimes have a registry?

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Since the onset of the 2001 police complaint arrived from the plaintiff, my son has been a responsible, hardworking, law abiding citizen with no incidents whatsoever, has kept a clean police record, has religiously registered four times a year then reduced to twice a year per the legal requirements of registration and is not a threat to society in any way. He has paid the price imposed by law by being listed on the national sex offender registry for the past 17 years with 8 more years to go and we have suffered along with him.

It is our wish that after his 17 year history of complying with all legal requirements has no criminal offenses or incidents and due to his circumstances regarding the conviction, he would be able to petition the court to be removed from the national sex offender registry and be able to have his conviction expunged. At this time, his offense is not expungable.

Due to the recent, positive changes in criminal justice reform regarding reduced sentences and early release from prison for other offenses, why can't **those that have already paid the price for their sex related offenses by being incarcerated, on probation or on the registry for more than 17 years be allowed to petition the court and given a second chance and not made to suffer for most of their entire lives? They have paid their debt to society.**

You think you are appeasing your voting constituents by placing ever more strict rules to the registry or making only minor revisions? You are just hastily feeding into hysteria to appease voters while those of us affected by these unconstitutional laws suffer for a lifetime. The sex offender registry is unjust, unconstitutional and violates the Eighth Amendment (cruel, unusual and excessive punishment).

Each registrant (Tier I, II and III) has different circumstances regarding their offense. If a registrant has had no offenses in over ten plus years and has had a clean police record in over ten plus years, there needs to be a legal mechanism put in place where a registrant can petition the court to have a judge review on a case-by-case basis to determine if the registrant can be removed from the registry, reduce time on the registry or have their offense expunged entirely. Close the SOR website to the public so that only law enforcement has access or abolish it.

Please do your jobs – there needs to be MUCH MORE THOUGHT AND HARD WORK TO MAKE MAJOR, POSITIVE REVISIONS to the Michigan sex offender registry so thousands may have the opportunity for a renewed life. Not everyone on the sex offender registry is a predator or a threat to society.

Thank you for your attention to this very important issue.

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