

The Honorable Graham Filler,Chair

May 17, 2020

House Judiciary Committee

124 North Capital Avenue

Lansing, MI 48933

Re: TESTIMONY IN OBJECTION TO HB 5679

Dear Chairman Filler and members of the Judiciary Committee:

I appreciate this opportunity to submit my testimony in writing for the record regarding House Bill 5679

My name is John Zakarzecki, I am a lifetime Michigander and currently listed on the Michigan Sex Offender Registry Act (SORA). My registration began in the fall of 1995 when the first version of the registry was enacted. I was serving my sentence in the MDOC for CSC 2 (750.520C1A)

Upon registration I was told that I must continue with the SORA registry for a period of 25 years. Upon completion of Parole, My agent noted on my Parole Release form that I must still continue to register as a sex offender until the date of my registry completion on 12/20/2020. Since that time there have been many changes to SORA, most notably during 2011. My registration completion date was replaced by the Tier rating system that now required my registration as a Tier III offender for life. I find this unfair and punitive. The Michigan Parole Board in evaluating my eligibility for parole listed me as a "low risk".

I believe the Parole Boards risk assessment of me for eligibility was fair, and proved effective. I have turned my life around and worked hard to reconstruct my relationships and be a responsible citizen. I completed all therapy programs, including Sex Offender Therapy and substance abuse counseling. My life is so much better now having the tools and skills to help me change and live a responsible life.

I have spent 24 1/2 years on this registry, to put that in perspective Bill Clinton was our President serving in his first term when I first registered. Times have changed dramatically in our society, we need to

review and determine where are we going with this registry. As years pass more and more people are added to the SORA with few exiting.

The registry has caused problems for my family members which I love dearly. By name association alone due to the public registry they chose to protect their families from social criticism and to protect their careers from employer scrutiny. It is hurtful to see a family member alter their last name to protect themselves from association with my offense.

I believe the registry could serve a greater benefit to society as a private tool for law enforcement, and eliminate the public registry altogether. I believe that all offenders need a chance to prove themselves worthy of reentering society as safe and productive members in our communities

In summary I hope that the members of this Judiciary committee consider carefully the testimony of all the other witnesses and professionals who provided their stories and expertise. I hope that a path forward can be found to untangle this legal web of confusion, and provide a timely path to restore the lives of registrants and protect their families as well as society at large.

Sincerely,

John Zakarzecki

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