

Greetings and salutations,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm honored by this experience.

My name is Benjamin Kozma. I'm 39 years old and have been a registered sex offender for 25 years. I have experienced every iteration of this law. Originally I was sentenced to 25 years of reporting. That would be up this year.

The 2011 change to the Sora laws changed that to life time registration. I was devastated. I remember signing that original paperwork and thinking "I'll be 39 before I got off of this..." To be honest my 14 year old mind couldn't wrap itself around that really. It's hard to fathom it's been 25 years since then. I was a child back then.

What's been a real kick in the teeth is how I've come to understand law, and the Constitution, and my rights as an American citizen, I've come to know that I'm a second class citizen. I don't have the same rights as you or your family. You look down on me as scum and deserving of being stripped of my rights. You have to by just looking at this legislation. It's appalling to see this come to committee, during a pandemic none the less, after the last law was deemed to be so bad the whole thing need to be tossed out.

The most egregious thing of the whole situation is its just flat wrong. The measures involved don't work. Your not fixing the situation. All the statistics show geographic restrictions on residence are just dumb. If you think your protecting the public by keeping me living 2000 feet away from a school your a moron. If you need a personal example of how moronic you are here you go.

I'm a single dad. My daughter is 15. In 2017 we lived at 23244 Almira St. Southfield MI. 2026 feet away from Glenn W. Levey Middle School. My daughter attended 7th grade there by the way. We were also 2100 so feet from Bradford Academy in the other direction. Guess how she got to and from school? She walked.

I'm sure I come off a bit hostile. Be sure that's the intention. Let me give you a bit of perspective. I have a very real situation on my hands that is a direct result of this moronic law. On April 6th my daughter was sexually accosted by my roommate. He's a 37 year old man. It's his house. I have a PPO established against him and he can't come here, but it's his house. I have to move. I have to get my daughter out of this house. Her sleeping is screwed, she's afraid to be here by herself if I get called back to work. And she has to wait until May 19th to give her side to a specialist.

Your recent move to committee on this dumpster fire of a bill has given me pause in where to move. I thought since the federal court has been so clear on this I'd be fine to move where ever. Obviously that's not the case anymore. Now my choice is to move back in with family, 2 hours away. I'm gonna lose the job I have that provides health insurance for us.

Oh and my mother has covid-19 right now. My daughter is immunosuppressed. We have to wait until that clears up. So now we wait in the house my daughter was offended in. Because of you.

I'm no longer ashamed of my past. It's a part of me and most people whom get the chance to get to know me accept me for who I am. It shocks people when I tell them and they have met through my daughter. There's so many on the registry you've taken the effectiveness of such a tool. Everyone I meet nowadays knows someone, or has a family member on it. I tell jokes about this on stage as an amateur comedian. I have to laugh about it.

I'm a voter, father, son, dad, boss, neighbor, tax payers, and victim of the prison industrial complex. I am the epitome of the concept of state raised. I know this because had my father been more wealthy he could have paid for my treatment. I could have avoided the sex offender registry all together due to the juvenile nature of my offense. You can't tell me this isn't the case, there were two boy in the facility I was in who's family paid for them to be there.

The irony is the person who is most affected by this is my daughter. I lost my job recently due to the discovery of my juvenile record. It was supposed to be expunged when I turned 18. Since the laws become more and more draconian, I've violated it multiple times in my adult life. 4 to be exact. I have 4 failure to register as a sex offender felonies. I've been homeless and broken it. I broke it by living with my family.

The last time I was convicted of failure to register as a sex offender, 2008. I was having issues with the mother of my daughter, we broke up and I moved in with my mom. I registered there and then had to move agine to my aunt's house. My step father was tired of me. My aunt lived in Pontiac and took me to the police station to register, they told me I had to call a detective. Gave me a phone number to call. I called and called and left messages. I was there a month. I rekindled the relationship with my child's mom and moved again. I registered, but I was listed non compliant. There wasn't a warrant then so I was let go but the next month when I came in to verify there was a warrant.

I did 6 months in jail and had 5 years of probation. 4 years later, I violated probation with a dirty urine for marijuana. I got resentenced and got a 4th habitual tacked on for good measure. I did 25 months in MDOC for that. The parole board made me get a psych evaluation as a condition of my parole.

The best quote from that eval is this "Mr Kozma poses no greater risk of reoffense than any other non-offender." Even with that eval quote, my parole officer made me do outpatient sex offender treatment. That was an interesting group. The therapist was genuinely fascinated by me. She had never had the chance to analyze and study a juvenile offender who completed treatment as a juvenile. She worked with adults predominantly. She's been an invaluable resource recently with my daughter's situation.

In closing I want to address the tone of this statement. It may come across that I'm not accepting my culpability in the results of my choices. Trust me I do. I know very well what my choices have done to the people around me. My sister was one of my victim's. I hurt her worse than anyone. Today she is one of my biggest advocates. She lets me interact with her girls. My daughter is like a big sister to them. I've paid my dues and don't need rehash that.

I implore you not to take up this legislation. It doesn't work. It hurts innocent people. My daughter in particular. She's done nothing but be born to me. This legislation is hurting her right now. Ironically it's supposed to protect her.