

I sent a rather lengthy email to all the members recently. I can be longwinded on this subject because it has impacted my life in a major way, and I am passionate about seeing some type of change. I will be as brief as possible without giving as much information about my original charge.

My name is David Michael Afton, I am 38 years old and I have been on the sex offender registry since I was 18. Long version short, I met a girl at a party, she lied about her age, we engaged in a brief relationship that lasted roughly 2 weeks, as soon as I learned of this girl's true age I immediately terminated the relationship which caused the girl to become suicidal and to attempt suicide because I would not talk to her anymore. Law enforcement became involved and I explained the situation to them chronologically. I was then arrested and charged with CSC third degree 750.520 D

I accepted a plea agreement to participate in the Holmes youthful training act and completed those terms.

Before accepting this plea, I was told that I qualified for the Holmes Youthful Training act, that I would have to serve one year in the County jail with 3 years' probation and that I would only have to register as a sex offender while I was on supervision for the offense. I accepted this plea agreement because I was told that I would have another chance at life. I was told that no one would know about the offense and that my record would be sealed, true my record is sealed and there is no sex offense on my criminal history. But the top of my criminal history check says child sex offender, I suffer many civil disabilities as a result of that which totally goes against the Holmes youthful training act. This act is supposed to protect youth from having a mark against them, but when it comes to a sex offense there is no benefit.

After I completed my one year in the County jail I was released on probation, I searched and searched for a job in the community that I lived in with no luck. Everybody knew that I went to jail for a sex offense and even though some of my friends that I grew up with knew the facts of the case they still did not hire me because they didn't want to be judged for having me as an employee.

I fell into a deep depression and became addicted to drugs. I spent years of my life trying to find purpose, and struggling with addiction, along with bouncing from job to job. The jobs that I did get I would only keep briefly until somebody found out that I was a sex offender and then I would be ridiculed daily or other coworkers would not want to work with me And I would ultimately be terminated due to this. I decided that I wanted to do something to help others after I got clean from drugs, so I took classes to be a drug counselor. However, I cannot be licensed by the state as a drug counselor with a sex offense. Even though I have no conviction on my record for a sex offense the first thing that pops up when you run my criminal history is that I am a child sex offender. It does not say when this happened it does not say anything about how it happened it just says child sex offender. The first word that comes to my mind when I see that or hear that phrase child sex offender is pedophile.

I decided to go to college after things fell through with the drug counseling, I am really good at fixing computers, so I chose Computer Science as a field. I thought that I just might be able to have a chance at living a normal life. Once again, I was wrong, I received a job offer from Dell the computer company because I had straight A's But unfortunately Dell could not offer me the position because of my status as a sex offender. On top of all that hard work that I put in to go through the substance abuse classes and

to attend college for years to acquire a Computer Sciences and Technology degree I still have not moved forward.

My family suffers as well not just me, I am not allowed to decorate for Halloween, I am not allowed to take my children trick-or-treating, I have to get special permission to attend any kind of event that my children have at their school. It is sad because when you have children as a sex offender word seems to spread amongst the other kids and their families which make your child a target of ridicule and discrimination. I am sure a lot of you are parents and have children, I have 4 myself. I have two daughters and two sons who I love with all my heart. Can you imagine how it feels when one of your children comes home and tells you that the kids at school are making fun of them because their father is a pedophile or a rapist. That is not fair to them, that is not fair to me. I did not rape anybody, I did not force myself upon anybody, I did not coerce or bribe this girl for sex. I had a choice to make and I did what I thought was morally correct. I did not tell this girl to not say anything to anybody and we could continue dating, that would have been predatory. I told the girl to stay away from me and not to come around me anymore that I did not want anything to do with her she was too young to be involved in a relationship with. This caused the girl to stalk me, when I finally snapped and blew up about the situation and told her to stay off my property it caused her to become suicidal. She ran away from home and later attempted suicide. I understand that the registry is there to protect our children and the innocent people in this society. I totally agree that the registry needs to exist, but I do not agree with certain people being on the registry. I think the intent of the offender is what needs to be looked at, a lot of men use the excuse "She lied about her age and I didn't know it." It makes me sick when I hear this because these men are trying to justify their choices, most of the time these are men in their 20s using that excuse. I was 18 years old I knew right from wrong. I did what I thought was right and that was terminating the relationship because it was not morally correct or legal. I have suffered for 20 years with this label, I just want to be able to pursue happiness and have a normal life where I can take my kids trick-or-treating and I can participate in events at school like a normal parent. I have a son that's five months old, he loves his daddy. It is going to break my heart to tell him that I am a sex offender and that I am not gonna be able to go to events at school or take him trick-or-treating or decorate for Halloween. Those are just a couple things that I know at this point I am not able to do. But there is so much more, I should have a job making between 60 and \$100,000 a year. But I don't, I have the knowledge but nobody will give me a shot because I have this strike against me, this stigma, this label that says I'm a dangerous person because I made a mistake 20 years ago by not checking ID at a party. I urge you to make changes that will protect the youth that makes simple mistakes. I was coerced into accepting a plea agreement with the promise of not having a record and no one knowing about the offense. In 2004 there were some adjustments made due to a case that set a precedent.

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Ultimately this offender was charged with the same offense that I was charged with and accepted the similar punishment. There was only four years age difference between the offender and the victim who were in a relationship. In my case there was five years age difference, but I can tell you this right now had I known that girl was only 13 years old we would never have even talked at that party. I would have turned away from her and stayed clear of her. I do not know what to say right now to convince you that there needs to be some positive changes to this law. All I can do is urge you to consider making some changes that will help people like me. Like I said it is the intent of the offender, I have met a lot of sick people in jail for sex offenses. I hate to say honestly most of them needed to be there, and most of them

deserve to be on a registry. The intent of their crimes was predatory and there is no disguising that. I am gonna end this Because I could go on and on and on And I will not. I know that you have more important jobs to do than to go back and forth with the ACLU over this sex offender law. I do not want to waste your time. I have exercised due diligence over the years and trying to be removed from the registry because that is the only thing holding me back from true happiness and success. I will hope that you take what I have said today and make a change that applies to HYTA and retro actively apply it. Thank you for your time have a blessed day.