

Chairperson Filler and House Judiciary Committee Members,

I am writing to share my thoughts on HB5679 and respectfully ask that you do not approve this proposed bill. I feel that the proposed bill does not fix anything that needs to be done and I believe that it is still unconstitutional. As a registered sex offender, I have had this black cloud over me for over 20 years and it has caused an immense amount of stress. I have not needed to be reminded of what led me to this point in my life but the quarterly reminders that address verification requires has brought this to the forefront each time.

Let me tell you who I am. My crime was committed in 1993 before the first Sex Offender Registry Act (SORA) was ever enacted. I served four years in prison and while I was there I participated in one-on-one counseling and group therapy to help me understand how I could have gotten myself into the situation that I found myself in by committing this crime. When I was released from prison, I was ready to start a new life with the knowledge I had learned. However road blocks started forming around me when shortly after I was released, there were revisions to SORA that made the registry public and required regular reporting to the police. Then from there the law kept changing almost to the point that I was feeling like I had been placed back into a different type of prison but this time I was sharing it with my wife who hadn't committed a crime. Finding a job became more difficult as the registry became public and it became even more complicated by needing to find a job that had hours that allowed me to still make it to the police station before they closed once a quarter. I also had hoped to go to college but then the law changed again and I would have had to tell them I was a sex offender – who would have wanted to do that knowing the repercussions I would get so another door was shut for opportunities to improve my life.

I am now 54 years old. I committed my crime when I was 27 years old which is literally one-half of my life ago. Because of the individual counseling and group therapy sessions I actively sought out during my four years in prison (from age 27 to age 31), I found out who I was, what I could become, and what I could do with the rest of my life to make a change.

There seems to be an umbrella effect that society places over all people that commit these types of crimes with assumptions that they want to do these crimes again and again. That simply is not fair and not true. Many, including myself, never wanted to commit a crime again and want to better their lives and start anew. This type of law only hampers a person's life by creating unneeded stress and not doing anything for the community. It just makes it more difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I am hoping that you can hear my voice and not the crime, feel who I am now and not what I have done, and understand what I want to do better, and not the sorrow that I have caused to others but understand that my remorse still sticks with me and always will. I have made positive changes in my life in spite of the burdens that SORA has caused. For the past 22 plus years since I've been out of prison, I have been a good citizen without even a speeding ticket and I have abided by the laws that have been put upon me

to adhere to even though they have caused me great stress. I would like to be set free at some point and I believe that I have earned it.

Sincerely,

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