

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kyle, and I am writing to you to portray my perspective on the sex offender registry in hopes that it will assist you in seeing how much it impacts the lives of so many, like me. I do not know your view on the subject and am purely writing this in hopes that it opens your eyes to the impact that the registry has had on my life, as I have tried so hard to open my eyes to why the registry exists. I hope that if you get a glimpse of what it is like to stand in my shoes, that it will influence you to stop HB5679 from passing.

At one point in my life, I felt as if I was on top of the world. I am an Eagle Scout, I graduated number one in my class in high school, and graduated with honors from the University of Michigan. My degree was a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and fulfilling the premed requirements for entrance into medical school. I was working in surgery at my local hospital and in the process of taking my entrance exams for medical school, when my world came crashing down. When I was away at college, I made a mistake that ruined my life and has hurt so many people around me. I was young, naïve, and stupid. I was intelligent in that I could ace any course in school, but I was stupid in life. I didn't have the experience that I now have. I didn't understand that actions could have consequences that could literally destroy one's life in a matter of seconds. I made a mistake and have paid for it dearly. The mistake that I made as a college student was that I entered a long-distance relationship with a high school girl from my hometown. Towards the beginning of our relationship, before she was of legal age, I met up with her while home on a school break and touched her breast. This was the first sexual contact of my life. Looking back, I guess you could say that I was immature in this sense. Shortly after, she became of legal age and we continued to date for close to three years. I was shocked when the Sheriff knocked on my door and served me papers because the two of us remained friends even when we broke up. I later learned that she had hid our relationship from her parents and when her father found out that she had been dating a college student, he lost it and took his anger out on me. My lawyer played for me a recording from the prosecutor along the lines of "we really don't want to charge this young man, but her father is coming in here everyday and this is the only way to shut him up." I plead guilty to a high court misdemeanor of Criminal Sexual Conduct in the 4<sup>th</sup> degree, was placed on the sex offender registry, and my life was over. I went from the top of the world to the very bottom in the blink of an eye. I went from being on my way to becoming a physician to struggling to find a job of any sort and have been a construction grunt ever since. I served my punishment. I did time in jail. I completed my sexual rehab class surrounded by men who raped babies and who spent years in prison. I paid my fines. I completed five years of probation without any issues. I watched three different probation officers come and go, and even they were searching for ways to help me get off the list because once they got to know me, they knew that I was a young, stupid kid who had made a mistake and who had a lot to offer the world. If I was sentenced today for the crime I committed when I was in college, I would qualify for the youthful trainee act and would not be put on the registry, but since I was sentenced in 2012, I will spend the majority of my life on it.

The sex offender registry has turned my immature moment of misjudgment into a lifetime of hell. It is not easy being on the registry and at times, it feels impossible. The real shame of it is that it makes it impossible to be a valuable member of society. And this comes from someone who used to donate hundreds of hours a year to my community and whose entire life goal was dedicated to helping others. Now, I cannot even use my degree, as no school, lab, or hospital would ever hire me with the label that I have. It's not my misdemeanor that is holding me back; it is the registry. It makes it impossible to be a valuable person and even a valuable family member. It kills me and my nieces and

nephews that I cannot go watch their soccer games because they play at a school. When I have children, I'm forced to be a bad parent because I cannot go to their conferences to ensure that they are doing well in school, but even more importantly I cannot make sure that they aren't falling down the same path that led to my life altering mistake. I cannot drop my future children off or pick them up from school or daycare. When a marriage should be an equal partnership, it unfairly puts the burden on my future wife. A father is beyond important in a child's life. He should be there to watch sporting events and band concerts. He should be there to cheer them on and to help them get back on their feet when they fail. A father should be part of ensuring that his children are doing well in school and setting their goals for their future. The sex offender registry makes this impossible. Not only does it absolutely prevent me from being a valuable member of society, but it also increases the odds that my children will not either. It harms them not only in this way, but the bullying that they are bound to face when others find out that I am on the sex offender registry. I know this because of the harassment that I have received from neighbors. Not a single one hasn't befriended me once they get to know the person I am and have researched my story, but at first, when they only see the label that I have, I have been threatened and harassed.

It seems to me that the goal of a society would be to maximize the number of people positively contributing to it and minimize those who are holding it back. The sex offender registry does the complete opposite. It holds us back and keeps us on the bottom. It ensures that we struggle to get a decent job and puts us on welfare. It makes it useless to dream and creates a purposeless life. It makes it difficult to even hold onto the jobs that we can manage to get. I have to take time off of work every time that I have to go to the Sheriff's office to register. This is not easy and difficult for my boss to understand. But my choice is to risk my job or go to jail. The choice is easy, because I am never going back to jail. I am never breaking the law again. I am slamming on my breaks at a yellow light. I'm not pushing a mile per hour over the speed limit. You couldn't pay me a billion dollars to repeat my mistake or reoffend because it has ruined my life. And it has truly hurt so many of my loved ones. I want so badly to climb my way out of this, but the registry makes it impossible. But it hasn't stopped me from trying. I know that no decent business will ever hire me because I am labeled as a sex offender. It is one size fits all and I am associated with the worst of the worst. If no company will hire me, I figured that I will create my own business and take the decision out of someone else's hands. I want to do it the right way, so I studied for my GMAT, scored very well on it, and applied to the Master of Business Administration program at the University of Michigan. I got accepted into the program, but it was not easy due to the registry. I had to argue my case and it had to be discussed amongst a number of boards at the school. I had to agree to not take a class in person and am forced to take classes purely online where class selections are limited. I am about halfway through the program with a 3.95 GPA, but even when I graduate, it's not like I can just go out and get a decent job because companies still wouldn't hire me. I still have to start at the bottom and risk everything by starting a company of my own.

To say that a person cannot change and once again be of value to society is ludicrous. I look back on the person I was when I committed this crime and I barely recognize that individual. I was young, naïve, and stupid. I had never experienced life and how harsh it can be. But, the person that I am today has experienced life and enough harshness to fill many lifetimes. The person that I am today would never make the kind of mistake that I did when I was a college student. The person that I am today knows better than anyone how valuable life is. I have not only experienced the harshness associated with getting in trouble from my crime, but the harshness of life itself. While struggling with adapting to my new life on the registry and the realization that none of my previous dreams could come true, the

most amazing woman in the world entered my life. She saved me. She gave me new dreams. I fell in love with this woman and she became my bride to be. She sat by my side the last time I spoke in front of this committee. I was finally happy once again. And then on September 18<sup>th</sup>, of 2018, my life was rocked once again when my fiancé was diagnosed with Myelodysplastic Syndrome, a blood cancer similar to Leukemia. She had the worst possible mutation and her odds were as low as they get. She had two bone marrow transplants. I quit my job and cared for her every hour of every day. Day and night with not a minute off. I held her hand as she was told that she has cancer, when she was told that she probably wouldn't be alive in a year, and throughout both of her transplants. I saw the pure joy in her face when she went into remission and the intense fear when she was told that she relapsed. I spent half of the last year sleeping in a chair in various hospitals around the state. I held her hand as I was the one to volunteer to tell her that she was going to die and squeezed her hand when my best friend gasped her final breathe. I said goodbye to her exactly a year from the day she was diagnosed. To say that a person cannot change and should be stuck on the registry because of it is absurd. There is not a person in this room who has changed more than me in the last 10 years or who values life more. My life goal is to continue her fight and beat cancer. But I cannot get a job in a hospital. I cannot get a research job in a lab. I can't get a job with the Cancer Society or the Leukemia Foundation because many of their events are in schools. I can't even volunteer to help those facing the ultimate fight. I want nothing more than to be of value to this world. Not just to be of value, but to maximize my value because I know I have a lot of it. But every roadblock known to man is put in front of me to keep me on the bottom. I see why people give up and stick to the life of crime. Not just because it is easier, but because the laws and regulations make it nearly impossible to do otherwise. They keep us in the dirt. There is nothing that will stop me from fulfilling my potential. I just hope that you make the right choice in helping me instead of kicking me back down every time I try to get back up.

Thank you for your time,  
Kyle