

May 5, 2020

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Judicial Committee Members,

I am simply writing you all today to let you know my experience with the current SORA and implications of being on the registry.

I have truthfully always believed that if you were jail, prison or on the Sex Offender Registry, you must be a bad person and have done something very, very bad, and therefore deserve the punishment of being on a "list of societal lepers". I didn't give it much thought beyond that.

Until last year when I met and became friends with someone who did indeed make a mistake (one he deeply regrets); spent time in jail and is now on the SORA for 25 years. This man is kind. He is loving. He is genuine. He is very intelligent. He made an error in judgment and was in an inappropriate relationship. He lost his marriage, custody of his children, his high paying job, his house and pretty much all of his money. Plus he spent a year behind bars. He has paid a sufficiently high price for his indiscretion. But now. But now the SORA. Now he is required to be on the SORA for 25 years. And who hires a sex offender registrant? How is he supposed to provide for his children and ex-wife if he can't get a decent job? In our country we are supposed to pay a debt to society and be able to move on, change, become a contributing member of society after we pay that debt. The current SORA laws and regulations make it nearly impossible for people to move on. It further punishes them and quite frankly, their families also. It is doing more damage than good. It is breeding fear mongering that is all too common in our society as it is.

To put it simply, the SORA must be re-written. The men and women on this list have paid their debt to society and shouldn't have to continue to pay and pay and pay.

Please consider giving this issue the attention and thought it deserves and the men and women and families affected by the SORA the respect as US citizens they deserve.

Thank you for you time,

Laurel Woodson-Shippert