

To: Chairmen Graham Filler and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

RE: H.B. 5679

The opposition to H.B. 5679 has been clear. This is not a good bill. It does little to satisfy the mandate established by the ruling of the 6th circuit court, continues to support the concept that everyone on the registry is a threat to the citizens of our state and does not address the pathway for individuals, who show little threat to re-offend, to be removed.

I would hope that this hearing has been educational for you and all of the members of the committee. It would not be unusual for you to bring to this review the prejudice that most people have when they first hear that someone is on the Sex Registry. I think Paul Reingold did a great job in his testimony on the 13th framing that issue. He made a statement a few years ago in the Michigan Law Quadrangle that was "spot on" with our experience:

"Once you put people on a public registry where anyone can see them, and keep them there for years after their crime, you are ruining their lives and their families' lives," Reingold says. "Under SORA they can't find work, they can't find housing, they can't attend parent-teacher conferences or school plays, or pick up their children when they are sick. Many of these people have not had a second offense or charge for years and have led respectable lives but for the one mistake they made back in the day, and which often involved poor judgment."

Our son, as I have shared with you in previous testimony, has been on the S.O.R. since 1997. As an 18 year old he was guilty of "poor judgement", successfully served his probationary period required by the Holmes Youthful Training Act, does not have a record but is **labeled** as a sex offender. He has lost his sense of hope, feels that he has been cheated by the promise that was made when he accepted the HYTA plea and has to continue to explain to people why, after twenty plus years, he remains in the public eye, facilitated by cyber technology.

He lives with us. Not because he likes the idea, but because he got tired of having to deal with having neighbors question his status and feel threatened by his occupancy.

He has a good job because he was able to explain to his employer the circumstances and unreasonable requirements of the M.S.O.R., but that should never be a condition that anyone needs to address when seeking employment. Thank God for reasonable people.

I realize it is not your job, as members of the judiciary committee, to try and fix this piece of legislation. It is your job to recognize that it does not meet expectations that were clearly defined four years ago by the court. For that reason alone you need to reject this bill.

You have heard little or no testimony in favor of H.B. 5679

What you have heard is an abundant amount of testimony from lawyers, research specialists and people who deal with the issue of what might be built into a useful registry. My hope is that you have listened carefully.

It is easy to champion a law like the M.S.O.R. – the people need to be protected! The sponsor of this bill said it again when he made his comments to this committee. What is difficult is to recognize

and stand up for correcting a law that does not do what it was intended and in fact does not offer to the people of Michigan any clear identity as to whom may be a threat.

My wife and I are in our mid-seventies. We have three sons. Someone once said, as a parent you live and enjoy your golden years though the life and experience of your most unhappy child. Ours has not been a pleasant experience. We are not alone. Thousands of parents and grandparents live with this unjust law. I hope you have the courage to make the right decision.

Respectfully Submitted,

Doug Stranahan