

Tuesday, May 28, 2013

Floyd Prozanski, Chair

Betsy Close, Vice-Chair

Other Committee Members:

Jackie Dingfelder

Jeff Kruse

Arnie Roblan

Good morning Chair Rozanski, Vice Chair Close and to the other members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary Jackie Dingfelder, Jeff Kruce and Arnie Roblan.

I am Clariner Boston Executive Director of Better People, located in Portland Oregon.

Better People is a non-profit agency that works with individuals who have legal histories. The program was founded by current Oregon State Senator Chip Shields, Senator Shields and I opened the program in June of 1998. We have completed 15 years of providing services to the Portland Metropolitan Community.

We provide cognitive behavioral therapy classes using an evidenced based process Moral Reconciliation Therapy to help clients change their thinking as a means of changing their behavior. We provide Job Readiness program using a 23 hour thoroughly research curriculum to help our clients become more efficient and effective in their search for employment.

From the Justice Policy Institute comes this information, *In an effort to pursue dangerous individuals and protect children from sexual violence, legislators have broadly targeted some youth with laws that publicly brands them as sexual predators. This is bad policy because public registries not only fail to protect communities, but they hurt young people by stigmatizing them while at the same time alienating them from crime-reducing social networks like families, schools and jobs- because they are not allowed to be around minors,*

Facts dismiss some of the more common misunderstandings about youth convicted of sex offenses.

Not a fact - Youth commit a large portion of sex offenses.

Fact - Less than 1 percent of all arrests of youth 17 years of age and younger were for sex offenses.

1 In 2006, youth 17 years of age and younger accounted for 18 percent of arrests for sex offenses. Youth under the age of 15 accounted for 9 percent of sex offense arrests in the same year.

Not a Fact: Youth convicted of sex offenses will become adults who commit sex offenses.

Fact: Research has shown that a young person who commits a sex offense is unlikely to commit another one.

There are other statistic that support that we should not be stigmatizing all youth involved in childhood sexual situations that requires them to be stigmatized for life by having to register as a sex offender and thereby ostracized because of poorly made and in most cased uninformed and uneducated choices made as a child.

My staff and I over the years see the extent to which such laws have adversely impacted clients who have no other charges except those dating back to their childhood. yet, they continue to pay a hefty price every day of their lives relative to housing, types of employment, social, political and professional associations, religious affiliations and any other entity that society deems to be inappropriate as a result of their childhood decisions.

Thus is not justice and we need to change our legal focus, social understandings and the laws that govern both.

With deep appreciation,
Clariner M. Boston, MPA, MS AJ
Executive Director
Better People