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Hon. Jeff Barker, Chair  
and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

I am writing to urge you to support HB 2549.

I was unaware of the unprincipled laws relating to sex offenders until I met my good friend (and now boyfriend) at the Computer Action Team. The Computer Action Team is the organization that provides IT support for the College of Engineering and Computer Science departments at Portland State University. My boyfriend is a Linux and System Administrator there, but he also does a significant level of training as well. When my boyfriend and I started to get serious, he pulled me aside and told me about his past. He asked me if I would be comfortable dating him with a knowledge of his past. He expressed regret and shame, and was open about exactly what had happened. He was 19-years old when he made the huge mistake with a teenage girl in another state. I am now the girlfriend of a "registered sex offender" even though my boyfriend does not fit any of the stereotypes of a sex offender. I fear that not everyone is going to understand his situation, and that they may naively assume that he is a creepy sex offender with no friends or life. My boyfriend is quite the opposite. He has a huge supportive and loyal friend base, and his friends are diverse.

My boyfriend and I have a healthy relationship, and our friends and family are supportive of it. My boyfriend has finished his treatment, and is scheduled to graduate college with a bachelors degree in Science. He frequents technical conferences often, and is asked to apply for high paying, and prestigious positions. The problem is that even though he constantly makes it through the interview process, and impresses employers, once he has to tell his employers that he is a registered sex offender, he is denied the position. This is discouraging for someone who works hard every day, challenging himself to be the best that he can be. Semi-permanent public humiliation seems like an archaic way of dealing with people when their crime was committed as a young adult. Research into cognitive and psychological developed has illustrated that the mind goes through significant amounts of change throughout the teen and young adult years. My boyfriend made a mistake when he was 19-years old, and he is now 24-years old. When will the public humiliation end? How many times will he pay before he can officially be pardoned?

I support HB 2549 because (1) it offers a pathway off the registry for people who have been rehabilitated; and (2) it creates more rationality in the system of deciding whether a former offender should be included on the public website. This is a smart move in the right direction. Although I have significant concerns about the methodology for assessing risk, especially for

young people, women, and people with disabilities, I am confident that best practices in this area will be explored in the regulatory process. (3) It also offers an opportunity for people like my boyfriend to grow up, have a normal life and family. This is what he wants.

I urge you to support HB 2549. Thank you for your consideration.

Candace Cheney

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