From: Shelley Ledbetter
To: DeJong Annola
Subject: Fw: [Oregon Voices] HB 2549
Date: Thursday, February 28, 2013 9:47:42 AM

Honorable Chair Barker, Committee Members:

I write to ask you to carefully consider the implications of placing more registered sex offenders online, but if we will not be allowed to maintain the status quo, then I urge your support of HB 2549, which attempts to inject needed fairness into the legal system's treatment of sex offenders.

The term sex offender refers to a broad range of behavior from public urination, sexting, and statutory rape to serial rape and child sexual abuse. When all these behaviors are treated the same, society becomes less safe as scarce resources are focused on people who are not dangerous as well as those who well may present a current threat. This provides the public with a false sense of security. HB 2549, by providing for levels of sex offenders, begins to address this concern; however, extreme caution should be used in delineating these levels. The current Static 99r assessment tool weighs very heavily on young registrants, many who are registrants due to teen relationships. My son, at age 19, was accused by a 15-year-old who had hoped for a relationship then became angry when her pursuit was unsuccessful so made an accusation that is, to this day, unsubstantiated and contradicted. Because he was threatened with 14 years in prison if something should go awry at a trial, he accepted a plea deal of five years' probation.

I have reviewed the Static 99r with a colleague and realized that my son would receive points because he is under age 35 and because he has not lived with a female partner for at least two consecutive years. This makes no sense, and I believe more points are scored due to age of victim. You can see how this will target the thousands of individuals who are now registrants due to teenage indiscretion and immaturity at the time. Under this proposed bill, it appears my son is already at least at a score of 3. A score of 4 or above would cause his information to be posted online and his employer would have no choice but to terminate his employment. He is living and working in a small community and he is making his way, but if he is posted online, he will lose his job and any chance at success, in fact, we would then be in fear for his safety if he were to be publicly posted.

I urge you to read the information included below regarding a young Washington state registrant who was murdered last year by a person who had accessed "the list" and killed him and one other registrant. When this man was apprehended, he indicated he was :going down the list and was not intending to stop this murderous rampage until he was caught. Gary Blanton

was a young father of two toddlers. His offense was committed in his teenage years. The online registry in Washington provided a roadmap for murder in this case. Please, please don't allow this to happen in Oregon and, God forbid, to my son.

I urge the Committee to require the Department of Corrections to provide for an individual evaluation in addition to application of an assessment tool as well as an opportunity for an independent review of Parole Board decisions. As you know, the consequences of being labeled a predatory sex offender are grave and have serious long term negative impacts on a person's life.

With these cautions, I urge the Committee to act favorably on HB 2549.

Respectfully,

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We Are Under Attack

Posted by Leslie Blanton 0pc on November 15, 2012

Being listed on the sex offender registry shouldn't mean a death sentence, but that is, tragically, what it meant for my husband Gary Blanton. Gary and another registrant were shot and killed by the same man who told police that he was going to keep on killing sex offenders until he was caught. This sick individual thought of himself as a hero and while that was devastatingly painful to hear in the wake of such a loss, what truly shocked me was how many people in our community supported this murderer for killing "these monsters."

My husband was 28 years old. He was on the registry for an offense he committed as a juvenile and he was working hard at being a good husband and father to our two young boys. He was no monster, but a true monster did show up in our lives and took Gary from us forever.

I believe that the news media shares part of the blame for Gary's murder. For too long they have allowed all persons required to register to be portrayed as "monsters." The news media has fanned the flames of sex offender panic and the consequences can be deadly.