

Committee members, and honorable Chair,

My name is Carlotta Woolcock. I live at 676 NW Adwick in the Beaverton/Hillsboro area, and I work in Hillsboro. I am here on behalf of Oregon Voices, a grassroots collection of family members, friends and concerned individuals who include registered sex offenders and others entangled in the justice system, that are attempting to piece together lives before, after and during prison sentencing. I am here to speak in favor of this bill, as we see this as a progressive step forward that will assist those who wish to put their past behind them, to move into a productive life in society.

First of all, I want to thank this committee, and the legislators who have been making attempt after attempt in past sessions to get something like this legislation through. It goes without saying that the subject of sex offenders is a quintessential political hot potato, and any politician or public official who is perceived as being "soft on crime" in general, and on crimes that fit within the statutory jurisdiction as sex offenses, is facing burned fingers from holding that virtual hot potato. So, we at Oregon Voices wish to thank-you for your diligence, persistence and effort.

That said, we have a couple of suggestions for strengthening the impact of this legislation for your consideration as it moves forward.

- The process of accusation/adjudication/serving time and post prison life holds many types of opportunities for truth to come forward and is often an emotionally charged, subjectively interpreted process in any crime, but especially in the court of public opinion for cases involving sexual offenses. Rules of evidence adherence, misconduct by police, investigators, defense and prosecuting attorneys, judges, as well supportive counselors and treatment providers are frequent subjects of pre and post conviction court hearings, as individuals struggling to put their lives into a track of normalcy, work to clear away barricades that hold them back from the rights we all assume in our nation.
- The question that jumps out to me, and others in our group, is, **who writes, and when do they write the recommendation** to the juvenile courts to effectively try this juvenile offender again and place them on the registry?
- Post release is perhaps one of the most critical points not defined in this bill. Is registry participation decided at the time of sentencing? If the individual is to be defended by an attorney in this type of hearing, will it be the same attorney as previous, or the registration recommendation accountable to the same district attorney? Is it decided by the gravity of the crime and conviction? What about individuals who are convicted in other states on criteria not consistent with Oregon statutes? Or is it decided while, after years of maturing through the juvenile justice system, the individual manages to demonstrate behavior inconsistent

with their teenage past, that would appear to be one of responsible citizenry? Who makes that observation and does the now adult individual have any role or say in it?

- I would suggest here, that in preparing this law, that means which explicitly guarantee objectivity, such as third party evaluation of all materials affecting the decision to recommend registry or possibly some other form of "fresh eyes" on the situation be inserted legislatively. This can be essential to avoid the connection of pre and post conviction behaviors that individuals, as they mature can decide to cast aside.

In my work with Oregon Voices, I field phone calls from individuals regularly who were convicted of a crime as a youth, and, twenty years later are still attempting to hold a job that will allow them minimal survival means. College and high school degrees obtained in prison or while in Juvenile facilities are helpful in that process, but employers who look at a person's current practice, not the mistakes they may or may not have made in the past are few and far between. The post conviction release process requiring counseling and therapy treatment is premised on the concept that these individuals can learn to break with the behaviors that led them to their crime. Too often, twenty years down the road those people are broken, anti-social, unable to even access limited community services that might help them due to their registry status.

This law has the potential to take the redemption process one step further, by allowing those youth full of whatever it was that got them convicted in the first place, to step beyond that. When those with whom they walk the reparations part of their journey, give them the chance, and have clearly defined priorities and criteria, statistically we have seen a reduced level of recidivism. Please be the ones who pave that path that juvenile offenders walk with solid moral ground, so they need not wallow in the shifting muck of inconsistency that they were unable to sort through in the past.

Thank-you.

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