



Oregon Voices
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February 15, 2017

House Judiciary Committee

Rep. Jeff Barker, Chair

Rep. Andy Olsen, Vice Chair

Rep. Jennifer Williamson, Vice Chair

Rep. Chris Gorsek

Rep. Mitch Greenlick

Rep. Ann Lininger

Rep. Bill Post

Rep. Tawna Sanchez

Rep. Sherrie Sprenger

Rep. Duane Stark

Rep. A. Richard Vial

Dear Chair Barker and members of the committee:

My name is Ken Nolley and I am writing in opposition to HB 2218 on behalf of Oregon Voices. I served on the committee that drafted HB 2549 in 2013. Since 2015, I have served on a committee working with the Parole Board on the process of implementing HB 2549. That legislation was crafted in an attempt to establish a risk-based approach to Oregon's handling of its registry. The federal government had pushed and continues to push for the crime-based registry mandated by the Adam Walsh Act. Unfortunately, however, all the research shows that crime type has no correlation with the risk of re-offense. The 2013 legislation was based upon the principle that risk to public safety should drive the organization of the Oregon registry.

HB. 2218 proposes to put persons who are convicted of trafficking minors or compelling prostitution on the state police website. We can all join together in our common repulsion for these crimes. But our goal should always be the creation of a safer society, and this bill does not point the way toward that end.

Public notification laws have been studied for 20 years now. Studies of registry effectiveness have been conducted again and again by researchers all across the country. The overwhelming majority of these studies can find no evidence that public notification reduces the incidence of sexual crimes. A very small minority suggest that there might be a slight deterrent effect to public notification; significantly, these studies were done on risk-based tier systems in which only higher risk registrants were subjected to enhanced community notification.

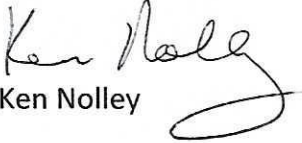
Additionally, there is some evidence that public notification may actually increase recidivism slightly. If so, this maybe because public notification destabilizes the lives of many registrants. 30% of registrants report job loss as a result of notification; between 10 and 20% report loss of housing; 44% report being threatened or harassed by neighbors. All of these factors are associated with higher risk of re-offense.

In sum, the body of research evidence clearly suggests that public notification makes sense only if it is limited to high risk offenders. And that is precisely what HB 2549 seeks to do.

If enacted, HB 2218 would move Oregon further away from a risk-based registry, And it would not be the last bill of this time to come before you; almost certainly it would be followed more and more bills of this type, undermining the legislation passed in 2013 before it was even fully implemented.

Please do not move this legislation out of committee. The evidence and experience of the entire country in the last 20 years argues against returning to a crime-based public registry.

Sincerely,


Ken Nolley

* All the data in this letter comes from the most comprehensive and rigorous review of the research I can find: Lasher, M., & McGrath, R. J. (2012). The impact of community notification on sex offender reintegration: A quantitative review of the research literature. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 56(1), 6–28.