

Submitter: Courtney Gelbrich
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB820

Oregon has the highest number of sex offenders per capita, which is over 3.25 times the national average. The current backlog of nearly 19,000 unclassified sex offenders, coupled with a useless website, protects the identities of sex offenders and prevents families and communities from protecting the most vulnerable - our children. A sex offender without restrictions can be allowed in schools, at sporting events and allow others' children in their home – all without the knowledge of the families they come into contact with. Daycares, schools, sports clubs and other child-based organizations are unable to protect the very children they are tasked with caring for.

As a life-long Oregonian, mother of 2 daughters and community leader, I am writing in opposition to Senate Bills 820 and 821. These bills would amend previous laws and allow for certain exceptions to the current classification process. The State of Oregon and the State Board of Parole and Post Prison Supervision are failing to keep Oregonians safe and aware of the potential dangers of sex offenders in their communities. Rather than applying more resources to fix our broken system, these proposed bills would reduce the number of sex offenders who are required to be classified and remove all deadlines to classify the remaining offenders. I feel strongly that our current laws and the proposed bills will further cement Oregon as a "safe haven" for sex offenders.

I believe that the children of sex offenders deserve the right to attend school, play sports and participate in activities without the fear of prejudice or bias. It is not my intent that the personal information of sex offenders be widely released by organizations and groups, however, families and communities also deserve to have access to information so they can protect themselves with knowledge. Removing the classification and deadline requirements simply makes the problem disappear, rather than fixing the underlying issues at hand. Senator Hayden's Senate Bill 1068 would require Oregon to carry over out of state risk levels to be applied when someone moves in state. This a non-partisan and simple fix so that more resources may be applied towards fixing our broken system. We also need a more functional and transparent website so that Oregonians can see who is in their community. Currently, community members can search for a name on the Oregon registry and not find the name because only certain sex offenders are being shown. This ultimately gives community members a false sense of security and safety because they can't see the potential danger around them.

The citizens of the State of Oregon deserve better than this and I request your help in

voting no on Senate Bills 820 and 821.