

To Senator Kissell, Senator Doyle, Rep Tong, Rep Reimbias and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I understand that I am submitting my testimony late but I hope you will consider my SUPPORT of HB5578 in your decision making process. I do ask that you remove my name from submission before adding this testimony publicly.

I am the wife of a man who is required to register as a sex offender for life. My husband is not a threat to society, he is an asset to society. I have been with him for 14 years now, married for 7 and I can tell you that he is most most gentle and protective person I have ever met. When he was convicted of his crime (I will get into details later in this email) he was 19 years old. He is now in his late 30s. He is a hard worker who has held down a consistent jobs despite how difficult it is for him to find employment due to his conviction. He is a home owner, a husband, a father to two beautiful young children.

He served 3 years in prison followed by ten years on probation. When he was released from prison he was 23 years old and did everything he could to get his life back on track. He was working 3 jobs and put himself through technical school. He was the first person in his family to graduate from anything higher than a high school diploma. He also met all of his probation requirements including attending group counseling. His status on probation was moved to the lowest level and had great reputations which every probation officer her had.

We were both still young when we started dating and I don't think we ever realized how much his registration would have an impact on our life. To be honest, we were so naive that we believed we had options to make this "go away". I write this now almost not wanting to admit how naive and ill informed we were. While he was on probation he told his probation officer that he wanted to bring his case back to trial. His probation officer told him he had to be OFF of probation before he could do that. Stupid us, we took the probation officers word and did not seek out a lawyer until a few years ago when we were informed that it was only possible to bring the case back to trial while he was in prison or on probation. I can't describe the feeling we had after hearing that. It was like a mack truck barreled through and banged us in the chest. We were being so stupid and so optimistic for so long that we went on our way having a normal life, having children, thinking this didn't have to be permanent. We now have two young children and the pressure we feel everyday about how his public status will affect their lives is at times unbearable. This bill is our last hope. Our children do not deserve to grow up wearing scarlet letters around their necks for their fathers past. What is worst is that he can't be the father he wants to be. He cant be as involved in their lives as he wants to for fear that he will be noticed and our children will suffer because of it. This public display has created such severe anxiety and depression. I have no doubt in my mind that any board that is assembled to review his case would agree that he was not a threat to society and that he does not need to be publicly shamed any longer.

What brought him to this in the first place you may ask. That is a question that is always difficult to explain without understanding all of points in his life that brought him to the place he was when he accepted a guilty plea. He had a troubled childhood and began getting into legal trouble in his teen years. At the same time he met an older girl and began a very unhealthy relationship which lasted 3 years. When he was 18 he moved into her apartment and proposed. When he was 19 the trouble he was getting into escalated and he had a wake up call.

He had several serious charges pending but, knowing he was set to start boot camp soon the prosecutor was working with him to get the chargers dropped. Also during this time he broke up with his fiance. He tried retrieving his things from the apartment several times but she would not allow him. He made an incredibly poor decision a few weeks after the breakup and while he was with friends, asked them to drive to the apartment so he could get his things in the middle of the night. He used his key to get into the apartment. While she was sleeping he grabbed his belongings. He left the apartment without waking her but then decided to try to get a few more things out of his car when the alarm went off and woke her. She came outside to find that he had taken his things and was with two other girls which caused a jealous argument. She called the police to report a burglary. When the police arrived she told him that he had also touched her while she was sleeping (for the record, she had made a similar claim against an unknown man at a bar just weeks prior). At this point he was hit with everything, his previous chargers, burglary, trespassing and sexual assault in the 2nd degree (since she said she was sleeping she was considered "physically helpless" which results in a lifetime registration). He had a public defender and could not post bail even though it was not a high bail. He sat in jail for 6 months. He was looking at prison time that would keep this teenager in prison until he was in his 30's. His public defender found out she was pregnant and said she would have to transfer the case if it went to trial which meant his case would be delayed even further. Also while he was in prison, he was put on medications to help with depression and he was having a hard time processing and understanding what was happening. He had no outside help. Finally, he decided to take a plea deal that would allow him to be released from prison when he was in his early 20s. This was only a few years after the sex registry had been established and he had no concept at the time for how this would affect his life. He took the deal because he was scared and because he didn't have anyone in his life to knock some sense into him.

Whatever your impressions are of that story, my husband has done nothing but walk a straight line for almost 20 years now. He served his time. He has made the best out of life that he could which is a pretty darn good life except for this ONE thing. He is a good person. He deserves to have a normal life. I deserve to have a normal life with him. Our children deserve to have a normal life with the most amazing father in the world. We all deserve to be at peace and finally move on. Please, give him the opportunity to prove this to panel of experts and give us an opportunity to live our lives.