

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1194

AN ACT RELIEVING CERTAIN REGISTRANTS OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SEX OFFENSE REGISTRY AND CLARIFYING REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PERSONS TRANSFERRED INTO THIS STATE AND

Title: WHO RESIDE IN CONGREGATE CARE SETTINGS.

Vote Date: 3/27/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/13/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

As there isn't currently a mechanism in place for lifelong registrants to be removed from the sex offender registry, this bill would allow certain aging, offense-free, lifelong registrants to deregister after twenty years as they have a diminished risk to community safety

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Natasha Pierre, State Victim Advocate, Office of the Victim Advocate: The State Victim Advocate opposes the bill on the grounds that the registry allows for the state to keep an eye on sex offenders and prevent them from reoffending as well as let society regulate them. It is their belief that the bill does not propose a risk assessment prior to removal from the registry and is therefore inconsistent with public safety.

Deborah Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Office of the Chief Public Defender: The Office of the Chief Public Defender supports the removal of individuals from the registry, as they had no way of knowing the consequences of their future sentencing, which has continued to make reintegration into society a challenge.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Lou (Last name omitted.): He testifies to their personal experience of accepting a plea for a crime which they denied committing, under the understanding that accepting the deal would

be the end of the issue for them and allowing them to move on with their life. They claim that had they known they would be added to a registry for life they would have gone to trial to defend their innocence. Finally, they recount the hardships they have experienced over the past thirty years of being on a public list.

Sara (Last name omitted.): She testifies to the long-term suffering their partner has experienced because of being included on the sex offense registry, despite over two decades of moral living and hard work. They express strong support for relief of their case.

Ron (Last name omitted.): The testifier expresses the belief that they have lived a productive post-incarceration life, having been convicted in 1992. They find the registry to be a hinderance in their everyday life, impacting their employment, schooling, housing, and friendship.

Senator Saud Anwar, General Assembly: The Senator recounts a case where an out-of-state sexual offender was sent to a Connecticut nursing facility, despite being a wanted sex offender in Massachusetts. This raises the concern of lack of risk assessments or checking out of state registries for any persons, which can help to prevent future cases where further harm can be caused by a known offender.

Paul Dubbeling: The testifier expresses the belief that the public offender registry is fundamentally broken. They believe there should be a "time to redemption" concept, where once sufficient time has passed since being released, the probability of reoffence becomes no greater than a non-offender, and therefore the individual should be removed from the register. For the worst sexual offenders, this time is twenty years, meaning if they live in society for twenty years without reoffending, they are no more likely to reoffend than anyone else.

Eldridge Evans: The testifier supports the bill, as they were personally retroactively added to the registry for a conviction in 1989. They have suffered the ramifications of the registry for many years, being unable to hold a job or attend their children's school events.

Kathy Flaherty, Executive Director, Connecticut Legal Rights Project: The testifier notes that those who were added retroactively to the registry are no more a threat to society than those who have never been on the registry, as they have been crime-free for more than twenty years.

Maureen Flynn: The testifier is the sister of a registered sex offender for a crime committed in the 1980s, prior to the creation of a registry. They express the belief that this bill would allow their sister to move on with her life as she has not committed a crime in over thirty years and the registry continues to be an impediment to everyday life far beyond what she expected when she was released.

William Hobson: The testifier supports removing individuals from the registry as the risk associated with them rejoining society is vastly outweighed by the personal benefit they would gain from removal. They note that after fifteen years, the recidivism rate drops to the same rate as those who have never committed a sex crime and that after 65 years of age, it drops to near zero.

Representative Anne Hughes, General Assembly: The Representative supports removing individuals added for crimes committed prior to 1998, as they have served their time in community without reoffending and, therefore, deserve to live out the rest of their lives in peace.

Jennifer Jasenski: The testifier supports removing the 800 people added retroactively to the sex offender registry, as their punishment was added post sentencing. They express the belief that these people are also punished financially, and socially, despite having served their sentence.

Aaron K: The testifier supports the bill, as they were convicted in 1997 of a crime which they believe has given them a life sentence. They disapprove of the registry continuing to impact their lives, their children's lives, and their parent's lives.

Amber Kelly, Associate Professor of Social Work, Quinnipiac University: The testifier supports removing the 800 people from the registry, as they pose no further risk to society but continue to be punished for a crime for which they already served their time.

Stephen LaPorte: The testifier has been on the registry since their release in 1997, during which time they have not reoffended but continue to struggle because of harassment.

Edward Morales: The testifier states that they have been punished by the registry on a social level, with all members of the family losing friends, attacks made on their house, and their family suffering heavily because of it.

Andrew Osmun: The testifier expresses support for combatting the injustice felt by those who have been on the registry for over twenty years.

Denise Paley, Board Member, NAMI Shoreline: The testifier supports removing the 800 people from the registry, as they have a recidivism rate of around 6%.

Lucie Raymond: The testifier supports the bill, as their husband was added to the registry retroactively, which has branded him with a scarlet letter for his life since then. They have grandchildren who would be hurt to hear that their grandfather is included on the list.

Scott Raymond: The testifier supports the bill after being added retroactively to the registry after completing their sentence in 1996. They want to be relieved of their extra 25-year sentence as they are a contributing member of society and wish to be allowed to participate in society in peace.

Olivia Rinkes: The testifier supports the bill as the evidence suggests these people will not reoffend after several decades of being members of society yet they are still treated poorly.

Skylar Seabert: The testifier supports removing the 800 people because they pose no risk to society and were retroactively added to the registry.

Amber Vlangas, Executive Director, Restorative Action Alliance: The testifier supports the bill as a survivor of sexual assault as the registry of individuals who were added 25 years ago retroactively does not further the cause of reducing sexual assault. They note the racial

disparity placed on those convicted of sexual assault and the impact their continued presence on the registry has after many were told it would be a temporary measure.

David Wasch, Legislative Coordinator, One Standard of Justice: The testifier disagrees with the idea that the registry is keeping society safe; it is not helping to keep the 800 in line as they pose no further risk to society. Similarly, they believe collateral damage done to the families of the registered increases the harm their continued presence has. Finally, they express belief that the political risk of not dealing with this issue now is that those retroactively added are aging and to continue putting off justice might result in no justice being possible.

Jason Wasserman, President, Restorative Action Alliance: The testifier supports the bill as the risk associated with those whose last offence was over twenty years ago is minimal. He states that the damage to their lives is significantly greater, with many encountering financial issues, the inability to attend school functions, and their children and/or family being on the receiving end of mistreatment.

Jack Willin: The testifier supports the removal of the names as the retroactivity is inherently unfair upon the individuals who had no idea that their sentence would grow to a lifetime punishment. It is their belief that these individuals do not pose a risk to society anymore, and the negative impact on them, their families, their friends, means that they should no longer be punished for a crime they have already served their time for.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU: The ACLU supports reintegration into society by those who have served their time. Those added retroactively are disproportionately black and elderly, and their clean post-release record is sufficient evidence that they no longer pose a risk to society.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: James McNealey

Date: April 5, 2023