



**Testimony of Amber Vlangas  
Executive Director of Restorative Action Alliance  
Supporting S.B.1194**

*March 13, 2023*

**Chairs Stafstrom and Winfield, Vice Chairs Flexer & Quinn and Ranking Members Fishbein and Kissel,  
and Distinguished Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary,**

My name is Amber Vlangas. I am a resident of Sherman, Connecticut and I currently serve as the Executive Director of Restorative Action Alliance, a group of anti-carceral crime survivors, individuals impacted by the criminal legal system, and restorative advocates and practitioners. I am writing today as a survivor of a military assault in strong support of **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 WHO RESIDE IN CONGREGATE CARE SETTINGS.**

SB 1194 seeks to reduce the footprint of the Connecticut “Sex Offender” Registry by allowing those grandfathered onto the list 25 years ago to be removed. Restorative Action Alliance is first and foremost concerned with reducing sexual victimization, and all evidence points to the fact that systems of lifetime punishment like conviction registries make us all less safe. These shaming tools create radical instability and divert resources from [practices that actually work to prevent sexual harm](#). As a survivor, I will not accept human rights abuses carried out in my name.

It is in the names of crime survivors that we have built mass incarceration, however, it is survivors who are forced to carry the heaviest burdens when state violence fails to deliver the safety it promises. What most survivors want most is - first for personal harm to end, and second to make sure that harm never comes to someone else. To secure the safety of survivors & communities we must implement interventions that transform the behavior of those who have caused harm and allow for the opportunity for everyone to thrive.

No one, not even another survivor, has the right to tell someone else how to feel or dictate how someone personally handles their own pain. Survivors deserve to be heard, to be safe, to have their needs met and have opportunities to heal. What we cannot do as a society is allow the personal pain of individual situations to demand responses that weaponize that pain to create bad policies that destroy entire communities and perpetuate cycles of violence. Harm demands accountability – the problem is that our adversarial system simply does not deliver true accountability or even center the needs of crime survivors – it creates additional violence, arrests the healing process, and places those who have perpetrated violence in a place of desperation rather than





a space where they take accountability and try to make things as right as possible. The systems that we put in place to protect, actually deter reporting and help-seeking because of the extreme absolutes.

The Registry law that was created in 1998 included a 10-year lookback, pulling in people who had either never heard of the Registry when they were released or were told that they would only have to register for 1 or 10 years. Many of these people were successfully reentering society when the burden of the Registry was placed upon them, threatening their housing, employment, and family.

The research is clear: Appearance on a conviction registry is not synonymous with risk. Like other parts of the American criminal legal system, the Registry disproportionately affects people based on race, disability, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation. It is an expensive and counterproductive tool that does nothing to help crime survivors and has [not proven to be an effective measure to prevent sexual offending](#). It has, however, been successful in [destabilizing individuals and families with overregulation and social isolation](#). Conviction registries cause members of communities to [hyperfocus attention and resources in the wrong places, making everyone less safe](#).

RAA is dedicated to breaking cycles of sexual harm through education, prevention, rehabilitation and restoration for all people. In order to create collective safety, our society must address the Registry's failed and destructive impact on those trying to re-enter after a conviction. People who have done the hard work of rehabilitation and remain offense-free should have the opportunity to contribute and participate in their communities in productive ways. It is for this reason that RAA supports the call for changes to the law that would relieve people who completed their sentences before the implementation of the Registry overhaul in 1998 from their obligation to register.

While working toward our ultimate goals to abolish the Registry and increase resources for survivors of sexual violence, we support policies that provide real relief to community members impacted by the Registry's harmful effects. Restorative Action Alliance encourages members of the public, the Judiciary Committee and all legislators to join us in supporting SB 1194.

**About Restorative Action Alliance, Inc.:** Through education, litigation and legislative advocacy, Restorative Action Alliance, Inc. helps create safer communities which invest in primary prevention of sexual harm, meaningfully hold those accountable who cause harm, and safeguard the civil liberties of all. More information is available at <http://www.restorativeactionalliance.org>.

