



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

Denver FIRST
The Denver Forensic Institute for
Research, Service, & Training

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Dear House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Dr. Apryl Alexander and I am a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Professional Psychology (GSPP) at the University of Denver. I have had over 10 years of clinical and research experience with both adults and adolescents who have sexually offended. I also am a member of the Association of the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) and Board Member for the Colorado Juvenile Defender Center (CJDC).

I would like to support HB20-1079. Registry laws were enacted to protect children from sexual exploitation and violent crime. These policies were extended to juveniles with the belief that youth who sexually offend were also at significant risk of re-offending, highly resistant to rehabilitation, and have more in common with adults with sexual offense histories than general delinquent youth. However, juveniles tend to be amenable to treatment and exhibit relatively low recidivism rates when compared with adults. Sexual recidivism rates for youth are relatively low given many states require youth who sexually offend to receive psychological treatment for their illegal sexual behavior and these evidence-based interventions result in lower rates of sexual recidivism. A 2016 study found an average 5-year sexual offense recidivism rate of just 4.92%. In fact, 33% of those studies, which were conducted in the last 15 years, reported a mean sexual recidivism of 2.75%, highlighting a decreasing trend in recidivism over time.

Moreover, registration laws may not be particularly effective at decreasing sexual recidivism, even for adults with sexual offense histories. To date, no research has indicated that registration reduces sexual re-offending reductions nor increases public safety. Although the public may report *feeling* safer due to these laws, there has been no indication of increases in public safety because of these laws. Registry laws produce several unanticipated and unintended lifelong *collateral consequences*. Many professionals, including law enforcement and mental health providers, do not support the registry for not only because of the lack of efficacy described earlier, but also due to these collateral consequences. Youth on the registry experience negative mental health consequences, including substance use and attempted or completed suicide. Youth registration status had serious repercussions for their families and familial relationships, including increased financial burden, difficulties maintaining residence, and familial separation. Some family members of registered youth lost their jobs as a result of the registration status of their family member.

Increasingly, states are beginning to remove lifetime registration requirements for youth. There are 11 states that do not register any youth. In December 2014, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court (in a 5-1 decision) issued a landmark ruling declaring that the lifetime registration requirements of SORN were unconstitutional as applied to youth, as it violates due process rights by utilizing the faculty presumption that youth pose a high risk of recidivism (*In re J.B.*, 2014). In April 2018, the New Jersey Supreme Court ended lifetime registration for AISB, citing rehabilitation and reformation remain hallmarks of the juvenile justice system (*State of New Jersey in the Interest of C.K.*, 2018).

By placing youth on the registry, youth experience the negative social effects of registering as a “sex offender” beyond the educational, occupational, and legal consequences. These labels lead to lifelong

stigmatization, marginalization, fear of mistrust by others, harassment, and rejection or isolation by family and peers. Therefore, I am in support of HB 20-1079.

Kind Regards,



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