

Proponent Testimony
Senate Bill 47
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Chairman Bacon, Vice Chairman Dolan, Ranking Minority Member Thomas, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee: Thank you for letting me submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 47 to provide my husband, Josh, an opportunity to get off the register of sex offenders.

My name is Jennah Strader, and I would like to be there in person, but I am busy raising our four children. They have special needs and need me home. It is hard to get a babysitter. But I want to tell our story, Josh and mine.

I was 14, almost 15, when I met Josh at church. He was 19 at the time. A friend of mine had introduced us. We had a lot in common and had the same hobbies, so we hit it off.

Our age was never a thing, it was something that never came up until we had spent time together, and by then it didn't really matter. We had already established a good relationship by then. My mom was aware of the age difference and didn't feel it was an issue because she had spent time with Josh and knew he was a good kid. Josh lived with his grandparents, who knew about the age difference, too.

Josh never pressured me to do anything; if anything, it was the other way around. He was raised with the value that you don't have sex before marriage. I was raised in a much different home and did not have the same values.

We ended up having sex anyway and I ended up pregnant. At the time, I was seeing a counselor, and when the counselor found out that I was pregnant, she was required by law to report it (even though she knew Josh wasn't a bad kid). I still see the counselor to this day, and she still thinks Josh is a good guy and an amazing father and hates that he has to be on the registry.

When Josh went to court, we just thought it would end up being nothing. We thought the judge would see that we were both young kids and we had made a mistake. Despite Josh's age, we were both kids. I was probably more mature, but we were both young and didn't realize that the choice we had made would affect Josh for the rest of his life. We didn't realize how much it would affect our children's lives and how much they would suffer from something that happened when we were teenagers.

But it did affect them. Josh cannot go to school for parent/ teacher conferences; he cannot coach soccer or baseball or attend school plays that our children are in. Recently, our school had a father/ daughter dance. He could not go. It broke my daughter's heart.

We have had to move several times, the last time being six months ago. The house we were renting, which was the only one who would rent to us, had rats. We lived there as long as we could, but no one else would rent to us because of Josh's registration. Our landlord finally bought another house. We had to make sure it wasn't too close to a school, but we were lucky and have moved in.

We were really hoping Josh could go off the register last year. Barb told us just before Christmas that the other bill wouldn't happen last year. made me real discouraged. I hold out hope that one day my husband won't have to be on the registry but right now the registry has made my life extremely difficult for him and me.

My 3 year old son who has a severe language delay and who is special needs ended up being admitted into children's hospital on Christmas Day diagnosed with severe pneumonia and a severe infection in his ear that we just found out was Mrsa. My son is extremely attached to my husband and gets extremely upset when he cannot be with his daddy. But because of him being on the registry every time he wanted to see Jaydan he had to be escorted to and from Jaydans hospital room and could only see him during visitation hours. Every time josh would have to leave Jaydan would get extremely upset which would only make his condition worse.

I find these rules to be extremely frustrating and devastating to not only my husband but to my son as well as well for any parent who has to be on this registry. Especially if your child is extremely ill or in some cases possibly dying, not being able to be by the child's side to comfort them or to be there until they pass it breaks my heart. Fortunately my son is recovering and hopefully will be able to go home in a couple days but this situation has made me want to fight even more for the rights of the people on this registry my son suffered more than what was needed all he wanted was his daddy at a time when he didn't feel well and didn't understand what was going on and he was not able to have that.

That is my life, and the life of my kids. They don't understand. I don't really understand, either. Josh's grandparents actually were the same age as us when they got married and had children and they've been married for almost 50 years now.

I request the members of this committee vote in favor of Senate Bill 47 to allow my husband, Josh, to petition for removal from the register, to allow him to finally be a part of the lives of his children.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee and its members.