

Members of the House Committee:

Respectfully, I disagree with submitted House Bill 289 for the reason that in reality it is hard to stay compliant with all the different rules regarding Ohio SORN, even for those doing their best to do so.

On paper it would seem it is a simple task - just follow the rules. But in real life, not all the rules are followed by the SORN office/officer(s) within a given county. The rules have become so complicated that not all county SORN officers understand the details of all the rules. And even if they do they will tell you they don't have enough time or resources to enforce all of them. The registrant is out of compliance because of what that particular office says. But later a new officer, or a new sheriff comes in. They read through the Ohio codes and decide their focus is on something the last regime was not concerned with. Now the registrant is told they are out of compliance. This could be as simple as a car not being registered, to as life changing as the registrant is told the place they are living is 994 feet from a school, not 1000 feet. If HB289 were to pass the registrant could have from a few months to years added back on (from the time they were actually out of compliance, even though a particular office said they weren't going to do anything about it, up to when the new office(rs) decided they were going to enforce) because of something not in his or her control.

These are not hypothetical situations. These are real life scenarios played out in Ohio each day. To penalize a registrant by tolling their time for something like this is not right. Most registrants try to be compliant because they want to become a regular, law-abiding citizen again. The empirical data from multiple studies show that only a slight percentage of registrants recidivate for another sex offense. Most are incarcerated again for technical (compliance) offenses. Before a bill like this is passed the understanding and enforcement within the legal system needs to be addressed concerning the present codes.

I believe you would see a great reduction in non-compliant offenders if the rules were easier to understand by both registrants and the officers enforcing them, instead of adding on more punishment to the whole mess that is SORN.

Please review and use the empirical data out there, instead of going off gut feelings and adding new laws towards citizens that are easy targets but won't do a thing to curb any criminal acts that put people on the registry.

Thank you for your time.

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