



RSOL Plans to Challenge International Law

President Barack Obama has signed HR 515 on the International Megan’s Law. Now legal challenges will begin.

Reform Sex Offender Laws, Inc. (RSOL) is disappointed that the U.S. House of Representatives concurred with HR 515 as amended by the Senate. HR 515 will require, for the first time in the history of the United States, the addition of “unique identifiers” to the passports of American citizens. The U.S. Senate added the historic requirement as a *Floor Amendment* offered by Senator Mitch McConnell on Dec. 17, 2015.

RSOL believes that the Senate amendment requiring the unique identifier may be in violation of *Wooley v Maynard*, 430 U.S. 705 (1997), which holds that the government cannot force someone to physically carry the government’s message. The passports with their identifying marks would be doing just that.

The measure was sponsored by Rep. Chris Smith, (R) New Jersey, who has been pushing for the legislation for eight years. The law is named for Megan Kanka, a 7-year-old New Jersey girl who in 1994 was sexually assaulted and killed by a convicted sex offender who lived across the street from her family. He also considers himself the international expert on sex trafficking and protection of human rights.

“The citizens of this nation should be afraid, very afraid, that a unique identifier will soon be added to their passports,” stated Brenda Jones, Executive Director of RSOL. “Who will be the next targeted group?” As passed by Congress, the Secretary of State is required to add a “unique identifier” to the passports of citizens convicted of a sex offense involving a minor. The list of offenses includes non-violent, non-contact offenses and even some that are non-sexual. “Passports today are used as a primary form of identification, not just to enter a foreign country,” stated Jones. “A passport symbol that identifies an individual as a registered sex offender

places that person and others traveling with him or her at significant risk of physical harm.”

In addition, HR 515 establishes a center designed to notify foreign countries that the individual plans to visit that he has been convicted of a sex offense involving a minor. This notification will be sent regardless of whether the individual has been deemed to be rehabilitated by a state and therefore is no longer required to register as a sex offender.

RSOL is gravely concerned that the notification provisions of HR 515 have the potential to harm thousands of Americans who have completed their sentences and are no longer required to register as sex offenders. In such instances, the federal government will substitute its judgment, which will not be based upon an investigation of the individual, for the judgment of a state government that has conducted such an investigation. Furthermore, no evidence exists suggesting that the passage of this bill or its subsequent enforcement will address the issue for which it is intended.

National RSOL and many of its state organizations lobbied in opposition to the passage of HR 515. Persons on the list serve on CURE-SORT and many members joined with RSOL and other organizations to contact lawmakers about the bill and had also contacted the White House urging the President not to sign it.

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There is a four-word formula for success that applies equally well to organizations or individuals—
make yourself more useful.

Anon

From the Editor's Desk

By Wayne Bowers

I'm always frustrated and perplexed when I hear and learn more about the inner workings of the development of legislation – both at the state and national level. This process dishonorably, in my mind, is referred to many times as “making sausage.” Well, I tend to believe there is a pinch of arsenic added to the makeup of so many of these laws. Let's face it, the party in power has a lot of weight in just determining what bills are heard or get out of committee. That alone is frustrating and falls back on the aspect of our government that truly does give the spoils to the winner. Yet finding out about the process of a bill going forward and how it happens is frustrating. Many bills, like this recent HR 515 on International Megan's Law were given approval on a voice vote. That means no accounting of how each person voted. Granted it ended up being a unanimous decision, but if there had been a roll call vote, we would have record of how they voted, and doing so may put more pressure on them when they have to answer to their constituents. . . . **Working for either defeat or passage** of bills helps various groups and individuals to gain more contact with each other and is helping us gain a bigger coalition. This is going to be necessary for our voice to be heard and eventually see them take notice. Think of all the kinds of campaigns and efforts that have gone through long journeys to gain traction in this country. We see an extensive level of over-reach in how people we represent are treated. A sad commentary is the fact that these negative approaches have been possible because they can. Well so far. We all must work diligently to get change made.

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“I used that time to my advantage. I continued my education through self-study, worked to become a better person with higher morals, and completed a counseling program. I've hurt a lot of people, but I feel I've changed in a positive way and can live my life in a healthy way now. I have goals in my life: right now I'm focused on getting back on my feet and trying to rebuild some of the bridges I've burned. When I'm stable I'd like to go back to school and learn about engineering and advanced manufacturing. I can't change the past, but I can learn from it. I've made positive changes in myself, and now I'm trying to move forward with my life.”

Galen Baughman's Talk Lays Out Futility of Sex Offender Laws

A YouTube presentation in December at the TedX Talk in New York City by Galen Baughman lays out the futility of sex offender laws and how they have led to an industrial complex of people benefitting from them.

Baughman, who previously worked for CURE as Communications Director, is now a Soros Justice Fellow sponsored by the Human Rights Defense Center.

The YouTube presentation may be watched at <http://youtu.be/pYt-3fai-PI>. It is a dynamic presentation and is well worth watching

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean itself does not become dirty.

Mahatma Gandhi

Obituaries

Three people who have been on our mailing list have passed away since our last issue. They are Gary Rayl, Denise Sawyer and Jon Marc Taylor.

Rayl was a retired administrator in the Kansas Department of Corrections. He had always worked for programs for improvement for those incarcerated. He lived in Hutchinson, KS.

Sawyer was the long-time office administrator for Dr. Fred Berlin at the National Institute for the Study, Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Trauma in Baltimore, MD.

Taylor was a prisoner in Missouri who had done extensive self-improvement during his incarceration who moved many people to realize the futility in our criminal justice system to not help persons more.

PLEASE NOTE: Check the date on your mailing label to determine if your membership due to expire. Also, Please let us know if your address changes—especially inmates—because your mail will not be forwarded.. Be sure to include your prison I.D. number to guarantee proper mailing.

Monthly Calls Begun for Civil Commitment Networking with Residents and Advocates

A monthly conference call, coordinated by International CURE, began this year to allow interested persons in civil commitment issues to participate and update what is occurring in the states where there are such facilities.

There are 21 states with civil commitment facilities, Federal and the District of Columbia. People from seven states gave reports at the first call in early January. Some detainees in facilities did participate. It is more difficult for some to be able to participate. Advocates and family in various states also participated.

Out of this call, people with legal expertise, commonly referred to as “jailhouse lawyers,” are forming a working group to share information and help develop challenges in various states.

“I’m glad Charlie Sullivan with CURE has begun this call. People are able to network with those in other states and gain ideas,” Wayne Bowers, CURE-SORT director said. “Let’s face it, we know how difficult it is to gain empathy in just prison issues, and it is even worse with civil commitment as many people do not even know what it is or what is involved. Finding support among like-minded people is empowering and we encourage anyone with concerns about this process to join in the calls.”

For a considerable amount of time, advocates in Kansas have been holding monthly calls to strategize and discuss topics they are covering to challenge the Kansas facility and program. CURE began a monthly call for New Jersey residents and advocates in 2015. Attempts to begin a similar monthly call in New York has not been successful as residents there were not allowed to participate. Plans call for more state calls as interest and manpower is shown.

For information about how to join the call, which lasts one and a half hours, contact either the CURE office in Washington, DC at 202-789-2126 or the CURE-SORT office at 405-639-7262. You can also write either location: CURE, PO Box 2310, Washington, DC 20013, or CURE-SORT, PO Box 1022, Norman, OK 73070.

CURE-SORT NEWS

CURE-SORT News is a publication of CURE-SORT. SORT stands for Sex Offenders Restored through Treatment. CURE-SORT is one of eight issue chapters of a national criminal justice reform organization known as Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE), located in Washington, D.C. CURE’s address is P.O. Box 2310, Washington, D.C. 20013. For more information on **CURE-SORT**, send letters to:

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CIVIL COMMITMENT AND THE THOUGHT POLICE

By Jim Prager
CURE-SORT Board Member
Prison CONversation LSW

I don't recall the name but several years ago a movie came out that incarcerated people for thinking of committing a murder. I remember this when I think of civil commitment. What have we come to as a society? Are we keeping people incarcerated because we believe they are thinking of committing a crime? If we follow this thinking there would be no one left to guard the incarcerated. OR do we only keep people incarcerated for sex crimes? Are we so afraid of sexual crimes that we refuse to believe that treatment can work?

We send people to civil commitment facilities that are supposed to offer treatment but how many have left these facilities after 20 years. What is the state of sex offender therapy in prison? Why is it that countries such as Germany provide treatment for people troubled with pedophilia without incarcerating or civil commitment? Do we believe that Americans with pedophilia are less capable of treatment than those in Germany?

Maybe, we have followed the thinking of politicians and correctional staff who believe the only way to deal with problems is to lock people up and throw away the key. We have tried that with drug cases and it didn't work. The media has followed the lines of politicians because it helps to increase viewership.

We need to be paying attention to treatment professionals who work with pedophilia (and other paraphilias) on a daily basis instead of people who sell us fear and punishment. We need to be paying attention to people who trust in treatment rather than those who use once said that we hate child molesters until we learn that our neighbor or brother is one.

An editorial in the Jan. 11, 2016, edition of *The Nation* states, ..."Reminding Americans that we are strengthened when we abide by our constitutional values rather than trample them in panic." Civil commitment is a trampling of our values due to fear and not understanding. We are better than that.

Letters Across the Nation

"M" in Indiana

This is my last year in prison. I get out in October. I've appreciated knowing CURE-SORT supports the raggedy class masses. And the newsletters have been well written. I have long supported CURE, IN-CURE and recently CURE-SORT. My hope in advocacy is that better, more responsible laws will be enacted to replace the blanket laws now on the books. I respect the exhausting work done by all CURE chapters to bring about positive changes.

CIVIL SUITS NOT PROGRESSING

Movement is very slow in resolution of the two federal court decisions in 2015 that deemed civil commitment facilities in Minnesota and Missouri unconstitutional.

In Minnesota the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals recently stayed Judge Donovan Frank's remedies until they hear the state's appeal. Oral arguments begin in April. Frank's remedies include giving all 700 plus residents of that program independent risk assessments by the end of 2017. In June Frank ruled that the 20-year old Minnesota Sex Offender Treatment program is unconstitutional and delays have continued since then.

In Missouri, after a September decision in September 2015 by Judge Audrey Flessing that parts of the Sex Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment (SORT) that houses about 200 was unconstitutional as applied and ordered the case for remedies. Since that ruling, there have been two rounds of court ordered mediations with a retired federal magistrate as the mediator. There was to be a third round scheduled early this year and whatever remedies are not resolved will be tried at the remedies hearing that starts March 30.

"Currently the Missouri Attorney General's Office (AGO) is held up on two aspects of the consent judgment that plaintiffs have proposed. Those two things are less restrictive environment and performing new evaluations on each committed individual within the program to determine whether or not his risk still requires him to remain committed. I am unsure if they will ever come around and agree to those; however, lawyers for the plaintiffs noted that they would gingerly push those issues," wrote Matthew J. King, resident at the Farmington, MO, facility, wrote to us.

"A few of the issues that the AGO would approve were the appointment of a special master to administer the program for a limited time frame, independent evaluations of the aged and infirmed (a joint resolution was filed on Dec. 28, 2015 concerning this issue), and retraining of the psychologist who writes the annual court reports for each committed individual.

"The AGO made it known that if the plaintiffs go to a trial and the judge orders things 'that the state couldn't live with (they) would appeal' to the 8th Circuit. This is heartbreaking news because it clearly demonstrates that they do not care about what constitution requires or about human conditions," King said. "It is my understanding that the 8th Circuit is not a friendly court for criminals and the like. You know the situation in Minnesota. Therefore, now we wait and see what will happen there."

SEX OFFENDER SPECIFIC TREATMENT

By Dr. JoEllen Wigginton
Pacific Professional Associates
Member of CURE-SORT Board

EDITOR'S NOTE: As our mission is to promote the importance of counseling for the recovery of those who have sexually offended, when appropriate, a discussion will be held in our issue along this topic. This is the second article in this series.

So what is the difference between psychotherapy and sex offender specific treatment, and how can treatment benefit those falsely accused of sexual misconduct?

Psychotherapy comes in many forms. Wikipedia, the popular on-line encyclopedia actually lists over 100 different basic types! The American Psychological Association identifies five broad categories: psychoanalysis and psychodynamic therapies, behavior therapy, cognitive therapy, humanistic therapy and integrative or holistic therapy.

Psychoanalysis and psychodynamic therapies focus on identifying and changing unconscious motivations and meanings related to maladaptive behaviors, thoughts and feelings. Behavior therapy focuses the role of learning while cognitive therapy focuses on one's thoughts and beliefs. Cognitive-behavioral therapy combines these two approaches. Humanistic therapy focuses on strengths and developing one's maximum potential, while integrative therapists draw from a variety of approaches and tailor treatment to their client's needs.

Traditional psychotherapy methods rely on the underlying principle of confidentiality and the idea that the individual in treatment is the client. These principals may not apply in sex offender specific treatment. Unfortunately, some programs require full disclosure of past sexual history with no guarantee of immunity from further prosecution, promote the use of polygraph to confirm adherence to all rules related to treatment, and for all intents eschew any therapeutic alliance in favor of a combative, confrontational approach. The rationale in these programs is that the community is the client and the offender must be treated so that the community/client is protected from re-offense

Many, if not most contemporary programs rely on cognitive-behavior therapy for sexual offenders, provided in a group format. This approach is used to target victim empathy, self-esteem, perceptions of others, social skill deficits, and cognitive distortions as they relate to offending behavior. Programs also often include relationship

and communication skills, sex education, assertiveness, sexual dysfunctions, relapse prevention, and gender role behavior.

Limits of confidentiality and the community as client rational can be overcome. Studies show that elements of effective treatment for sex offenders include group cohesion, good organization and leadership, the encouragement of open expressions of feelings, the production of a sense of group responsibility and the instillation of a sense of hope among group members.

In addition to identifying and correcting issues relating to offending behavior, effective therapy can be invaluable to help overcome the emotional challenges related to sex offender stigma, as well as probation and parole restrictions. It can also be instrumental in developing and implementing strategies to avoid future allegations for those falsely accused of misconduct. More detailed exploration of "treatment targets" will be covered in future issues.

If incarcerated, feel free to donate

There was recently a donation request late in 2015 made by CURE-SORT to members of our database who are not in a facility. In the past when a donation request was made, some people in a facility have made contributions by either a certain dollar amount or stamps. There may be some of you incarcerated who do wish to make a donation to our work, which is greatly appreciated. If so, you may send it to the address listed on page 3.

Resources

We are pleased to offer the following resources. Donations accepted to cover cost of postage and printing. Mail donations to the CURE-SORT address noted on Page 3.

One Breath At A Time by Ila Davis (\$17.50)

Understanding Offending Behavior by Stephen Price. (A collection of 9 of Price's articles from previous newsletters) (\$4.00 for the set of 9 articles)

When Someone on the Registry Moves Into My Neighborhood (Member Price \$5; Non-Member Price \$10)

SUPPORT GROUP: Families & friends for those in civil confinement, contact Andrew Extein, MSW. Interested persons please e-mail: CCN@curenational.org

No More Victims – One Man's Journey Into Sexual Offending and Recovery, By S. Sands (Ed G), \$13.95 (includes shipping). Request by e-mail to: gunder788@verizon.net

Responses, Good Ideas to Job Interview Question

In the last 2014 issue a question in the “Letters” section from John in Florida about people’s thoughts on what to say on a job interview, being at church, and with others. Here are a couple responses that were received, and most pertains to job interviewers or with people they know:

By Burton in South Dakota – Always, with the understanding that personal accountability with those close to you is an “absolute must” to ensure relapse will not occur: Only share that information with those people who “become” close with you. Prior to becoming close: you only need to say “I made a bad choice and paid the price by going to prison where I learned about myself and my bad choice and how to avoid this from happening again.”

At job interviews, most employers ask about the crime to be sure it did not involve money or property crimes: thinking to limit potential risk associated with money and property crime posed by new employers. You should start by saying “my crime did not involve money or property.” If the interviewer needs more information; simply say “I was convicted of _____ on _____ and have served my time and learned to not make bad choices.”

Remember, as a sex offender, you should NOT apply to work at jobs that pose a risk to the employer and the public; i.e., day care, schools, medical, charities, youth league programs, etc. Only apply to “safe” jobs, i.e., telemarketer, customer support/service, construction, welding, mechanics, factory, coding, scientific research, etc.

Employers only want dependable workers who are productive and low maintenance. Sell them on how you are all these; and remind them too: **THAT YOU HAVE SHOWN THEM FAR MORE ABOUT YOURSELF THAN OTHER APPLICANTS SHARE.** So they have a much better place to make a hiring decision.

So, even with all this input from you, if you do not get the job, at least you gave this business a positive experience with a sex offender. This may open the door for you later on in a follow-up interview.

Remember, most folks do not want the gory details – they only want to know that you acknowledge your past, paid for it, learned from it and know how not to get into this situation again. So, by simply stating this; mean it; and live by it. This will take you much further than you might believe.

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**By Matt in Iowa** – I am the founder and co-chair of the Employment Support Group, a reentry preparation self-help group, which I started at my current prison two and a half years ago. For the year before that I was on the board of a similar group called the Hubbub Job Club that was started at my previous prison in partnership with the University of Iowa and Iowa Workforce Development.

Learning how to explain your incarceration without ruining your chances of getting the job is something we spend a great deal of time on in the ESG. I gathered the following tips over the years from many authorities on the matter: the Iowa Reentry Handbook, volunteers from Iowa Workforce Development, the head of the HR Dept. of my current prison (with over 35 years of hiring experience), the Reentry Coordinator at my current facility, an employment specialist at a halfway house in Iowa, and professors from the University of Iowa. Here they are:

- Be honest, up front, and own it.
- Do not give details. They do not want to know (chances are they already know from a Google search), they just want to see you take responsibility for your mistakes and actions.
- Do not make excuses, blame others, minimize, justify, or play like you’re a “victim of the system.”
- Show how long ago it happened: to make it sound further away, state how many years ago that it happened (i.e. “6 years ago” and not “in 2008”).
- Sandwich the bad between the good. People tend to remember most the first and last things you say, so start with a positive, own your crime, and end with your positive changes.
- Focus on your positive changes: classes you’ve taken, programs you’ve completed, insights you have. Emphasize that you’re a different person now from who you were then.
- Make sure it sounds natural and not like a memorized speech. We tell people in the ESG to memorize the key points of their speech, not the whole thing.

The following example demonstrates what you could say:

“I’m glad you brought that up, because I’m the type of guy that would rather talk about the elephant in the room than be uncomfortable. The people you work with are like friends, and you should be comfortable around your friends. Six years ago I was convicted of a sex offense and spent three years in prison because of my poor choices, but I didn’t just sit around and do nothing.

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See Job Interviews on Page 2