

# Transparent & Accessible: NARSOL Board fields questions

written by NARSOL | January 20, 2017

NARSOL in Action's teleconference call of 1/19 was well attended and very informative. Board of Directors members present were Brenda, Jon, Larry, Peter, Robin, and Sandy. Georgia attorney Barbara Gail was also there to help Peter Marana (also an attorney) and Larry in discussing legal matters. Most of the program was guest-hosted by Chris Rainbolt of Texas Voices, with Chris asking questions that had been received from interested members.

**What is NARSOL?** The name stands for National Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws, which we think is a much better description of what we are. The description we gave ourselves is "Fighting to restore dignity and constitutional rights to millions," meaning persons convicted of sexual offenses and their family members. In picking the name, we wanted to keep the initials but get rid of the "sex offender" term.

**What moving the corporation from California to North Carolina means for our members:** it means absolutely nothing; we moved the corporate domicile from California to the state where our 501 c3 foundation is incorporated because the reporting requirements and such are less onerous. Our member base in California is not affected in the least, just as members in Texas or Wyoming or Massachusetts are not affected by where the organization is incorporated.

**NARSOL's governing structure and relationship to our affiliate organizations:** We have an elected board and open board meetings, as any other advocacy group should. State affiliates are: (1) totally autonomous and govern themselves; and (2) the states have majority control of NARSOL as well through the electoral process. We also have Contacts and Advocates in states as individual volunteers. Affiliates agree to report

regularly to NARSOL on their doings, assist in answering questions that come in to their state, and stay within NARSOL's vision, mission, and goals. We in turn help them grow as advocates and build their organizations, if they ask for help.

**Our involvement in advocacy at the national level:** Presently due to a lack of human and financial resources we have no real presence in terms of direct lobbying. Instead, we have chosen to focus our efforts on state legislatures, which are where registry laws and most criminal penalties are made. It is at the state level that we can ultimately have the most impact; thus, we are trying to focus on building these grassroots education, legislation, and litigation efforts.

**What legal projects we are currently involved in as a national group:**

**Rhode Island:** we provided financial support to the ACLU in coordinated effort to stop retroactive expansion of residency restrictions. That case is awaiting trial.

**North Carolina:** we are participants in the amicus brief in support of the Packingham case, a social media access case which will be heard by the Supreme Court in February; we are also on the ground floor with a case that will be filed jointly by NC-RSOL and NARSOL challenging registration, proximity, and other registry enhancements imposed by the North Carolina Legislature since 2006.

In **Georgia** we are exploring options with GA NARSOL for litigation there dealing with Superior Court Judges issuing blanket orders regarding sex offender supervision that are contrary to state law.

We also touched on the cases from the state of Texas dealing with residence restrictions. One of those cases is pending before the United States Court of Appeals.

**What we are doing about IML intervention:** We are currently in a holding pattern waiting, first, to see how existing litigation filed in California develops. For us to consider an additional case, once the parameters of IML are established, we would search for a strong and favorable plaintiff, and carefully build our arguments, and assure that we can recruit the best attorney(s) and expert witnesses. All of this requires a concerted and coordinated effort and lots and lots of funds. These are the other reasons we are in a holding pattern.

**What we do to coordinate with other organizations:** we make such attempts where practical; we were involved in a large, cooperative effort at our last conference; we met with Paul Rigney of Action Travel Group at our recent strategic planning session, and at that session, we discussed and will develop a plan for further collaboration with appropriate organizations.

**Our strategic planning meeting in Dallas:** We worked hard establish our goals for the coming year and will be working hard to meet them by the end of 2017: Fearless support groups are one big goal, as well as more legal involvement in cases from the inception, expanding our member base, collaboration with other groups, and enhancements in the areas of the Digest, press releases, social media, and video projects.

The remainder of the session was given to audience members asking specific questions and board members answering them. These included questions about support groups (Fearless) in specific states, legal issues, and our upcoming conference, which has been scheduled for June 2-4.

