

Sex offenders need not apply

written by Mike W | June 22, 2018



By Mike W . . . At our core we cherish opportunity and equality as key American values. They define us. They make us who we are. Any obstacle that inhibits opportunity and equality is not only a major barrier; it is discrimination when it limits people unnecessarily. When discrimination is a barrier to opportunity, we have a responsibility to eliminate it. We must not tolerate discrimination in any form.

One of these barriers to opportunity and equality is the sex offender registry. The registry is a double whammy to those trying to be effective citizens. One is the conviction, then on a published list outlining the offence – some that are decades old. Larry Hill, 34, of Mt. Pleasant, MI, knows this process too well. In 12 weeks' time he applied to 62 different companies trying to get a position as a truck driver. Larry completed several months in jail, time on probation, and therapy which presented the tools needed to ensure the likelihood of re-offense is greatly reduced. None of the 62 companies have given him a second chance after seeing he was listed on the registry. "It's hard, ya know? I've been clean and sober for over 5 years, and paid my debt, made my amends.

You think that would count for something.”

In fact, putting people on a registry eliminates opportunity and equality in that it:

- Focuses on the worst moments of people’s lives rather than the present;
- Fails to account for what rehabilitation was completed;
- Neglects to explain how those injured were compensated;
- Lacks any accounting of what positive actions were taken post-offence;
- Discounts any improvements made such as getting an education, supporting a family, participating in the community, etc.;
- Creates collateral damage for family members;
- Dismisses the skills that can be gained by the company versus an event that occurred in the past;
- Actively discriminates against people with records;
- Disregards whether the job at hand has any connections with the elements of the offence;
- Prevents those on the registry from beginning a stable and productive re-start;
- Shames people for an event they can’t change;
- Instills a constant fear of accusations and blaming from unknown people who were never involved and are ignorant of the facts surrounding the event.

We have a compelling and clear responsibility to ensure that government allows freedom and equal opportunity for all. We must do that without adding to the barriers that people face emerging back into society. We should hold clear policies that welcome second chance opportunities for those who have changed their lives around. Once people pay their debts to society, they should be encouraged to become full, productive, tax-paying citizens. It is in everyone’s best interest to remove barriers to success so that people who have paid their debts really do get a second chance. The best way to make amends to society is to give back without harmful restrictions.

We call on people everywhere to oppose and eliminate the sex offender registry. It is an ineffective, harmful barrier to employment and prevents people from making full re-entry into society.