

N.C. press release: “Outrageous” to ban state’s registered citizens from state fair

written by Robin Vander Wall | October 18, 2022



Raleigh, North Carolina . . . It’s time for the North Carolina State Fair, but thousands of North Carolina’s citizens are prohibited from attending it. Free citizens!

Some of these citizens are fathers and mothers with children who will likely miss out on the opportunity to visit livestock and poultry exhibitions with their parents—serving as a painful reminder that their dad or mom is still **treated as second-class citizens** even years after serving time in prison and/or being removed from probation.

After suffering a setback to its first effort at regulating where registered sex offenders are permitted to go ([Does v. Cooper, 2016](#)), the North Carolina General Assembly revised and enacted a new premises statute in 2017 that goes even further

by resurrecting portions of the previous statute declared unconstitutional and adding a statewide ban on sex offenders attending agricultural fairs.

Consequently, registered people who have completed their criminal sentences and fulfilled all their probation or post-release supervision obligations—**individuals whose civil rights are otherwise restored**—are banned from being “on the State Fairgrounds during the period of time each year that the State Fair is conducted.” ([N.C.G.S. § 14-208.18\(a\)\(4\)](#)).

“The premises law simply goes too far. It’s egregious and outrageous. It’s overkill,” said Robin Vander Wall, president of [North Carolina RSOL](#). “This is a matter of fundamental fairness and equal protection under both the state and federal constitutions.”

“And we’re not asking for anything crazy or out-of-the-ordinary. There are hundreds, possibly thousands, of North Carolinians with **violent felony records** who have been welcomed to attend the state fair for decades. They have a right to be there because they are citizens of North Carolina who have completely satisfied their criminal sentences,” said Vander Wall.

“Registered sex offenders (with lower repeat offense rates than any category of offender except murderers, see #1 below) who are **no longer under any form of supervision** and who have been released from probation should have the same right to attend the state fair as anybody else,” Vander Wall concluded.

#

North Carolina RSOL, an affiliate of NARSOL, was organized and incorporated in 2016 when several registrants and their supporters formed to create a more visible presence throughout the state after being urged on by reports of resurgent legislative efforts to enact tougher laws against North Carolina’s more than 22,000 registrants and their families.

1. *North Carolina's sex offender population has the lowest recidivism rate among all categories of offenders. (Source: <https://ncrsol.org/2016/05/nc-recidivism-report-sex-offender-recidivism-lower-than-other-offenders/>)*
2. *The most exhaustive law enforcement study existing cites a re-conviction rate of just 3.5% after three years. (Source: <https://narsol.org/resources/s-o-myths/>)*
3. *Nine-out-of-ten sexual assaults are committed by someone well known to the victim (Source: <https://bjs.ojp.gov/nibrs/reports/sarble/sarble19>)*
4. *More than 95% of new sex crimes are committed by people who are not listed on any sex offender registries. (Source: <https://narsol.org/resources/s-o-myths/>)*