

The DC conference pronounced a success

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Highlights of the Conference

Speakers: There was an array of speakers covering many of the issues of interest to our population, including electronic monitoring, legislative strategies, traveling as a registered individual, collaboration among organizations, the church's response to folks on the registry, and others. They were very effective and informative. The first day closed with an excellent presentation by NARSOL board member David Garlock.

Legislative Meetings: Various conference attendees met with staffers from the offices of various legislators. In general, they were well received and listened to with respect and concern, especially about the ever-widening net created by the registry. We were surprised to learn that some of the legislators knew next to nothing about this issue; increased education on state and national levels is essential. On a positive note, some have requested follow up meetings.

Vigil: On the anniversary of the *Smith v. Doe* decision, which ruled that the registry was not punishment, a vigil was held on the steps of the Supreme Court. A coffin was carried in by pall bearers, and attendees were dressed as mourners. The names of many of those who have died as a result of these terrible laws were read. One man showed up on this VERY cold morning with no jacket in remembrance of a man who was turned away from a Salvation Army shelter because of his registration status. He froze to death that very night. After the vigil, many attendees offered their gloves, scarfs, and even their own body heat to warm him up, It was extremely impactful.

NARSOL board members Brenda, Don, David, and Paul attended a portion or all of the event as well as a dozen or more NARSOL representatives and members from at least half a dozen states.

Reactions most often expressed are, even though it is disappointing that more did not attend, the event was a success, and the hopes are that something similar will be repeated. Especially appreciated are the camaraderie, fellowship, and unity of organizations.

Members from a variety of organizations, including NARSOL, WAR, ACSOL, UV4SOR, and RAA, expressed interest in working collaboratively to plan an activity that the groups could work on together.

NARSOL thanks WAR for organizing this event and sincerely hopes that the plans for increased unity and collaboration bear fruit.