

What Feeds Rape Culture?

By Sandy

No publication is complete without occasionally referencing the fashion world. I ran across this fashion topic through a “rape culture” alert I subscribe to. The term rape culture showed up five or so years ago, and describes a society in which the abuse and exploitation of women by men is encouraged and supported and, by extension, a society in which males hold almost all of the power and privilege.

This has resulted in many things. One is the rise of a militant type of feminism that seeks not to promote women—a noble goal—but to belittle men. Another is the insanity that is sweeping U.S. college campuses, resulting in accusations of sexual assault being treated like convictions, with any insistence that the accused receive due process being derided as coming from “rape apologists” and as proof of male privilege and the existence of rape culture.

But what does that have to do with penises on dresses, you ask? Let’s start with the fact that the fashion collection is named, “My pussy, my choice.” Add to that a major motif running through much of the collection—“cartoonish penises in transparent latex and sparkly silhouette.” http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2015/09/11/new_york_fashion_week_clothing_covered_in_cartoon_penises_makes_a_feminist.html

And the reason for this questionable choice of design and accessory? “It’s

like playing the penis game,’ Namilia [the designers] said of its playful use of a symbol of male power. ‘The more often and louder you say it, the more harmless it becomes.’”



A comment made in reference to a bra constructed of representations of male genitalia—one on each side—reveals what this is all about. “Filling out sparkly 2-D testicles with breasts is a brilliant power play.”

Power. Make men’s most obvious difference from women a fashion accessory, reduce it to a meaningless pattern on a piece of clothing or, even better, something in which to insert a female body part, and men themselves are negated to something weak and laughable and pathetic.

Feminism was originally about equality. It was embraced by those of

Calendar of Events

- 10/13 — Board meeting
- 10/14 — RSOL Review *
- 10/27 — Advancing Advocacy
- 11/10 — Board meeting
- 11/12 — RSOL Review *
- 11/24 — Advancing Advocacy
- 11/24 — Digest submission deadline

** subject to change; check RSOL website*

both sexes as something whose day was long overdue. This feminism is about power. It is the opposite of equality. It allows no equality. If you question that, imagine the fall-out if a designer of men’s clothing used the pictorial representation of breasts and vaginas to decorate shirts.

Actually, you don’t have to imagine. Just remember back a few short months. A brilliant scientist, Matt Taylor, instrumental in the success of an important ESA mission, had his career

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...Am I There Yet?

By Dolley M.

Here he is—polite, mannerly, respectful, and very humbled. Not the typical picture in your head of a sex offender, which would probably be closer to creepy, vile, and obnoxious. No, just a guy named Darren who is homeless, recently released from prison for an attempted sex offense conviction, and who also happens to be a U.S. Veteran with post traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety who I was attempting to help find some resources that he might be eligible for due to his serving nine years and a full tour in Afghanistan.

As we arrived at the local County Veteran’s Services Commission and sat down with an eligibility specialist, Darren spoke of having involvement with the VA

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And the Beat Goes On....

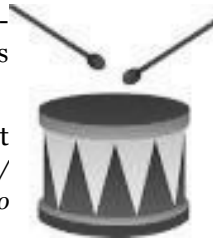
This may be a record month for articles and reports supporting our advocacy. Drum roll, please, as we roll out just some of them.

A policeman in Colorado is helping registrants get jobs and support. <http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/commerce-city-wants-sex-offenders-to-be-employed-and-contribute-to-the-community>

The Lebrrie prep school case bears many similarities to the Zach Anderson case; this journalist interviews and quotes R S O L . http://www.unionleader.com/In_Labrie_conviction,_there_are_concerns_that_law_goes_to_o_far_

Retired judge says the Michigan registry is “like a cancer.” http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/publicsafety/retired-judge-michigan-sex-offense-registry-like-a-cancer/article_8a492487-9b46-51c9-b8ff-9a1a60680170.html?fb_action_ids=513552972130196&fb_action_types=og.comments

Virtually universal contempt and outrage for charges against a dating couple of the age of consent but under 18 sexting each other; especially ridiculed are the charges the young man faces for exploitation of a minor—himself!—for having nude pics of himself on his phone. <https://reason.com/blog/2015/09/01/these-teens-kept-their-sexting-private-b>



<https://reason.com/blog/2015/09/02/teen-boy-will-be-charged-as-adult-for-ha>

The New York Times weighs in: “The Pointless Banishment of Sex Offenders.” <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/08/opinion/the-pointless-banishment-of-sex-offenders.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=opinion-c-col-right-region®ion=opinion-c-col-right-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-right-region&r=3>

If you aren’t convinced by now that “rape culture” is a fabricated, incendiary concept, these articles from “The Community of the Wrongly Accused” should help. <http://www.cotwa.info/2015/09/the-real-college-rape-culture-young.html> <http://www.cotwa.info/2015/09/appalling-trend-innocent-young-men-are.html>

Civil commitment is still in the headlines; “U.S. judge rules handling of state’s sexual predator program is unconstitutional.” http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/federal-judge-rules-that-missouri-s-sexually-violent-predator-program/article_8ea46baa-5e3f-5773-a1d1-9465c9d08feg.html

And of course, our favorite, residency restrictions: “State Courts Strike Down Overbroad Residency Restriction for People Convicted of Sex Offenses.” <http://www.eji.org/node/1145>

Registered Citizens Distance Restrictions Project - Volunteers Wanted!

Who: We want you! Led by our WV State Contact and Advocate Philip Kaso and open to all research assistant volunteers

What: Registered Citizens’ Distance Restrictions Project

Where: Sign up here to volunteer: <http://goo.gl/forms/nzR7M6i1GN>

When: Ongoing until complete

Our mission is to find and record all registered citizens’ distance restrictions in the US by state, territory, and city, with the ultimate goal of publishing our research on the National RSOL website.

We have 25+ research volunteers currently working on the project but there is always room for more!

What will I do as a research volunteer?

- Review and fact-check the current listing
- Pick an area to research or fact-check, i.e., state, territory, city
- Research using on/offline references
- Add your research findings to the listing using Google Sheets (similar to MS Excel)
- Add comments on existing data based on your fact-checking

If you’re interested, please let us know by filling out the [volunteer form](#) and we will contact you with details on how to get started. Volunteer form:

Act today and be a part of a project that matters to us all!

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RSOL does not in any way condone sexual activity between adults and children, nor does it condone any sexual activity that would break laws in any state. We do not advocate lowering the age of consent, and we have no affiliation with any group that does condone such activities.

What Does Judicial Discretion Mean?

By Larry Neely

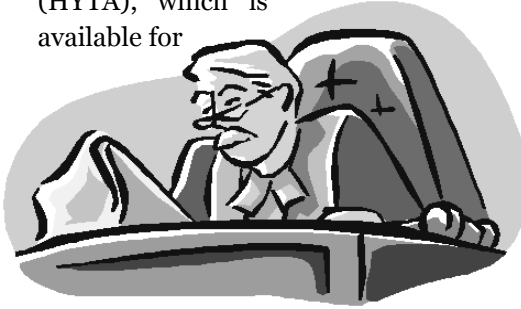
Many of us advocates proclaim that we believe in judicial discretion. Judicial discretion is defined as "A court's power to act or not act when a litigant is not entitled to demand the act as a matter of right." See Black's Law Dictionary Ninth Edition, pg. 534.

Most advocates say that they believe in judicial discretion; however, I frequently question our sincerity when we make such proclamations. The case of Zack Anderson immediately comes to mind as an example of inconsistency. Before I go further, let me state that I do not have an opinion regarding the court's sentencing in Zack Anderson's case because I don't have all the relevant facts nor did I sit through the sentencing hearing. Zack Anderson (19 years old) pled guilty to having sex with a 14 year-old girl in Michigan a few months ago. The court imposed a sentence of 90 days in the county jail followed by 5 years' supervised probation. And as a result of the conviction, Zack was required to register as a sex

offender.

Subsequent to Zack's sentencing, there has been considerable publicity and public outcry from many that disagree with the judge that sentenced him.

The controversy centers around the Holmes Youthful Trainee Act (HYTA), which is available for



young offenders between 17 and 21 years of age. The purpose of HYTA is to give young people a second chance. It is fortunate that Michigan law recognizes young adults do make mistakes and that those mistakes shouldn't destroy their future abilities to be productive members of society. According to Grabel and Associates,

a law firm in Lansing Michigan, "The Holmes Youthful Trainee Act (HYTA), MCL Section 762.11, recognizes that an individual can greatly benefit from a second chance." The HYTA spares the youthful offender of having a conviction because no adjudication of guilt is entered after the plea.

Although most claim that they believe in judicial discretion, I frequently hear parents or loved ones complain that someone else got a

lighter sentence for a similar or more serious offense. They often proclaim that fact alone proves that the system is unfair.

When I ask them what they really want, often I find out that they feel that the other person should have received a harsher sentence. Of course, this fails to take into account the many variables that go into imposition of a sentence. HYTA is discretionary and is not something that all youthful offenders in the state of Michigan are entitled to as a matter of right. In fact, there are many offenses that are excluded from eligibility for the HYTA. In this case, the judge exercised his discretion in a manner that many do not agree with.

Mandatory sentences and lack of judicial discretion in terms of sentencing options are probably the two major factors in the explosion of our prison population in the United States. However, the point of this column is that judicial discretion works both ways.

If we do not like it when the judge is forced to impose a particular sentence because there is a mandatory sentence, how can we be intellectually honest with ourselves if we now proclaim that this judge should have been forced to grant Zack HYTA status? The judge stated his reasons for not granting HYTA. In the order setting aside Zack's sentence, the court stated, "The court's sentencing was based upon the Court's observation of the victim at sentencing, who appeared to be extremely young in development and maturity, and whose mother stated that she had mental and physical conditions requiring medication." The judge further ob-

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Changes are Coming!

Last month we told you that there would be some changes in our schedule. Those of you who subscribe to the print edition will receive it around the end of the first week of the month. Corrlinks subscribers will get theirs around the same time, and the e-edition will be published within a day or two of that.

Another big change is that we are moving to a bi-monthly publication schedule for all editions. There will be no Digest in November; the December edition will be the next. Next year the Digest will come out in February, April, June, August, October, and December. Those who have paid for a year's subscription of 12 editions will be upgraded to two years' subscriptions of 12 editions; longer subscriptions will be extended also.

The Legal Corner

This is a reader contribution section that solicits legal questions from our readers. Each month a question will be chosen and answered in the newsletter by a member of our Legal Project. This section is intended for information only. It is by no means to be considered legal advice, and it should never substitute for seeking the services of an attorney.

Please note: We often get specific legal questions about someone's conviction or about state-specific registration obligations. Unfortunately, we can't answer them individually because: (1) no one here at RSOL is licensed to practice law; and (2) we do not have the staff or budget to answer the large volume of incoming mail.

Please send your legal questions to The Legal Corner, RSOL, PO Box 36123, Albuquerque, NM 87176. Your question should focus on only one issue, and it should be a question that has relevance to a wide number of registrants and not specific to just your individual case. **This month's answer is provided by Larry Neely, Chair of our Legal Project.**

Q: I will be released soon after 25 years' incarceration. I want to leave the United States because of the illicit retroactive application of the Adam Walsh Act. How do I legally leave the United States without being arrested when I board the plane or prevent some bureaucrat from issuing a warrant for me 90 days later when I have not returned?

A: Your correspondence included three questions, and we selected the third question hoping to address your other concerns within the answer. Let's begin by clarifying that a registered citizen (not under active supervision) is not prohibited from traveling internationally by federal law; therefore, you are unlikely to be arrested for leaving the United States.

Before I go further, it is important to distinguish the right to travel outside the U.S. from a right to enter a foreign country. Americans do have a right to travel; however, they do not possess a universal right to visit or be physically present in all nations on the planet. In fact, all nations including the U.S. have limitations on who can legally enter.

The final Adam Walsh Act (AWA) Guidelines (promulgated by the U.S. Attorney General) require 21 days' advance notice of international travel. However, not all states have included that requirement in their registration schemes. I am not aware of any re-



quirement that you return to the United States within 90 days of departure; thus, I cannot conceive of any reason for a "bureaucrat to issue a warrant" if you are outside the U.S. for more than 90 days.

Notwithstanding the preceding comments, Congress is working on a proposal that may soon change the rules. In 2013, the House passed H.R. 2848, which would have placed restrictions on sex offenders who wish to travel internationally and would revoke the passports of those convicted in foreign nations of similar crimes. In May of 2014, the House passed a second bill that applies to sex offenders convicted of crimes against children. Neither of the proposals passed the Senate.

Both bills proposed to change the passport issuing process so that sex offenders would be required to renew their passports every year instead of

on the normal 10-year renewal schedule. This alone would likely lead to increased scrutiny on sex offenders because they would have a different passport. The House again passed legislation early this year that is very similar to the earlier proposals, and that legislation is now in the Senate awaiting action. Since next year is an election year, the odds are that something will pass and make its way to the president's desk.

Know the Rules of Your Country of Destination

It is very important that you learn about your destination country. Although you have a right to travel and leave the United States, many countries will not accept visitors who have any sort of criminal record regardless of the crime. For example, Canada will refuse to grant entry to anyone with a felony conviction as well as many misdemeanors. Other countries will allow persons with certain criminal backgrounds but not those related to sex crimes.

Before choosing your destination, do some research on the country's visitation policies because all nations have the right to determine who they admit. Also, keep in mind that one traveler's experience may be different from another's, so be sure to look at multiple accounts before you make your decision.

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From Our States

From the editor: From time to time we receive a letter or an email asking why there are no reports from a given state. The main reason is that we do not have a contact, advocate, or affiliate in every state. It might also be that our volunteers were too busy or had nothing newsworthy to report. If you want to see more “action,” we encourage you to get involved, yourself! Without our volunteers, nothing will happen.

West Virginia

1. Collaboration call with Erin Comartin on how to effectively build a WV Advocacy team
2. As lead for the RSOL Registered Citizens State, Territories, and Cities Distance Restrictions project:

Met with Larry to get project approval and to schedule some time on the next National Review to announce/discuss the project. Designed a master shared Google sheet for the collection of distance restrictions. Seeded the master with initial data for all states, territories, and a few cities.

Met with Brenda and Robin to finalize the project and get feedback. Met with Rick Dean to coordinate on research assistant volunteers. Had Sandi publish a volunteer recruitment post in the Aug RSOL Digest.

Coordinated with eAdvocate to have him post our volunteer recruitment. Had Brenda send our volunteer recruitment email to the RSOL affiliates list for subsequent forwarding by state organizations. Created a Research Assistant Onboarding and Instructions document. Recruited and on-boarded to-date 24 volunteers who have begun the research and logging work

Maryland

FAIR's Board of Directors has been meeting with a handful of past and po-

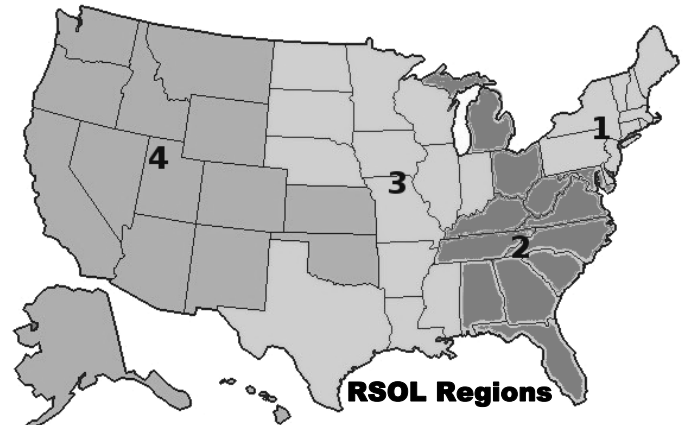
tential members, and pondering ways to better engage its membership. So far, we have added a Public Information Officer, are attempting to get our Facebook page more “likes” (and thus more family members of registrants!) and are preparing to launch a pilot small group in the lower Eastern Shore.

The goal is to get the word out about FAIR to more people around the state, get them involved, and build our membership and volunteer base. The leadership will be meeting again in early November to report back on how these initiatives are going and make plans on what comes next.

Our class action challenge hit an interesting “problem” recently, in that almost all of our named plaintiffs have now been removed from the Maryland registry! There are plenty of other folks who have not, however, and we are planning to add a few more.

Texas

Summer is over, and after a much needed ‘slow down period,’ we are once again busy planning our strategies for the next few months and beyond. Our Texas Voices Board Members will be meeting next month to begin planning for our annual conference that we hope to schedule for late March. Members



are also connecting with their legislators and educating them about the overblown, over-inclusive, good for nothing registry.

We are also in the process of creating booklets of information on the topics of residency restrictions, recidivism rates, deregistration, and a few other issues we hope to address during the next session. Although our next legislative session will not begin until January 2017, it's never too early to plan and prepare.

We continue to receive large amounts of calls and emails from Texas registrants. Many are looking for housing and jobs; some are simply reaching out for support, and others are asking what they can do to help. It is a sad situation here in Texas, and as I connect with those who contact our organization, I pray that our message of hope and encouragement helps to relieve some of the stress and sadness.

Best to all our sister organizations, and keep up the good work!

Vermont

The Vermont group of RSOL has really begun to make some progress towards bringing our issues to the forefront. Within the last month RSOL Vermont's leader, Tim Burgess, has met with a few

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religious leaders and is working on opportunities to speak to a few church groups.

In November RSOL's state leader will be speaking at two local Rotary Clubs to discuss the issues around registrants and re-entry obstacles.



RSOL VT is also in the process of fundraising to assist with the costs associated with the advocacy that we are doing. Along those same lines, RSOLVT is hoping to become a registered (no pun intended), entity with the Vermont Secretary of State's office, which will give the group a little gravitas with the community as a whole.

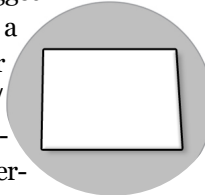
Colorado

CSOR had two great outreach opportunities this month, one with Volunteers of America's Veterans' Administration

(VOA-VA) Program, and the other with Bear Valley Church in Lakewood, Colorado. Here are the details!

VOA-VA Program, Denver

I was invited to lunch by a caseworker at the VOA-VA Program (Housing 1st). This caseworker attends quarterly CSOR Meetings, and it was obvious by the intense look on her face at meetings that she was very interested in helping find ways to improve the housing situation for those with a sexual offense background. Her suggestion was to do a luncheon or dinner for all the landlords/management personnel that various interested groups had listed as being willing to rent to registered citizens.



The VOA-VA Program, better funded than CSOR at this time, offered to pay for the meal, but the invitations will be an effort of a larger coalition of persons

and groups that assist in this field. We'll let you know how it goes! Will the profit motive and the "helping" motive be able to come together over a meal?

Bear Valley Church, Lakewood

I was able to present to three services at Bear Valley Church this morning concerning the need for support persons to help those incarcerated with a sexual offense meet criteria to get out of prison. The presentations were given to at least six hundred people across three services, and a display with handouts was located in the church lobby for people to visit before or after services.

A statement was made at the beginning of each 5 minute presentation that if there were people in the congregation who had experienced sexual abuse, our hearts went out to them, and that we welcomed any who had experienced sexual abuse into our goal of restoration for all. Besides people who were just touched by my son's personal story of success (so far), I was visited by two persons who had been victimized: one gave a \$10.00 donation but did not leave her name, and one said that she had been molested by her father whom she forgave. Others who stopped to visit were: someone with the Circles of Support and Accountability Programs; the father of a young man who has a form of autism and is currently in prison for a sexual offense; a young woman whose "whole family" is in prison and who wants to help in some way; and a registered citizen who attends the church and had met his wife there.

The eight people/couples willing to leave their names for CSOR Updates via e-mail and the CSOR Newsletter all had some connection to sexual abuse, prison, or other sexual intimacy issues. These presentations are to be followed by a six week class on myths and facts, sexual

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Remember, **subscriptions are only \$6 for the year for inmates, \$10 for those on the "outside,"** which is less than RSOL's costs to print and mail the *Digest* to you each month. Just send a check (or ask a family member to do so.) And if you have no way to send a check, we also accept stamps.

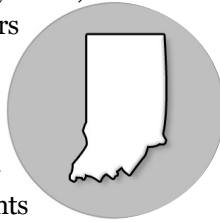
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abuse issues 101, bad laws, the effect of media coverage, and how people in church can get involved in making our society safer by helping lessen restrictions and laws that cause recidivism rather than keep it from happening!

Indiana

At present we are working with ACLU to combat a new law which prohibits some SOs from entering school property at any time with no exceptions. This could include churches that have attached schools or are licensed day cares, and the law makes no provision for minor offenders who may themselves be banned from school property under the current construction of the law. We will also be proposing legislation that grandfather in existing SO housing providers and their clients from the distance restriction. Indiana RSOL is also in the process of reorganizing!



Arkansas

It's been a relatively quiet month in Arkansas. We're waiting to see what reform ideas will be presented to the Criminal Justice Oversight Task Force on the last day of September. We're ready to show our support for good reforms and to give our disapproval to bad ideas.

ATAT was present at a caucus of reform groups in Little Rock on the 19th. The meeting focused on workshops to develop effective campaigns for reform, the need for effective communication strategies, and, of course, effective lobbying. ATAT

members attended the second and third workshops. One point of discussion was familiar, to build and maintain effective coalitions.

A good deal of the information presented covered ground we had already learned, definitely from many friends we made at the National RSOL Conferences, notably "Building Relationships" and "Learn the Process." But one of the handouts, "A Baker's Dozen Rules for Lobbying," contained some very interesting points worth considering and sharing. One point got some very good laughs: "Never park in a legislator's parking place unless, of course, you are waiting to take him/her to lunch."

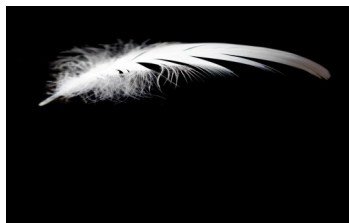
Another point, that it's important to give "Quick, simple, honest information," was proven even before the meeting and workshops ended. Standing in line at the lunch break, one ATAT member was chatting with other attendees when one asked about Arkansas Time After Time. That opened the door for these and several observers to get good, accurate information about the SOR and various SO laws, but presented in a non-threatening, informative manner. The usual responses to what they heard and learned were, "I never knew it could be so bad," and "These laws are crazy!"



The object lesson we took away after the meeting ended is: make sure that all coalition groups and members know full well what we and other SO groups want to reform and why, as well as for us to know what other member groups want to reform and why. ATAT attendees, thanks to good, solid information gained from RSOL Conferences, were able to make some good suggestions to the rest of those present, which made our group all the more welcome. It was a good experience, and we'll keep working to keep the good ties we made at this caucus.

"It Could Be You" continues to serve as a good source of information and to garner positive attention. John S reports that previous guests have gotten uniformly positive feedback from their in-state and out-of-state friends and colleagues about the program. They in fact forwarded several of these comments to John and to the station.

John got some belated feedback concerning an interview he conducted earlier this year with a



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Pope Francis to Congress: Punishment must include rehabilitation, hope for restoration

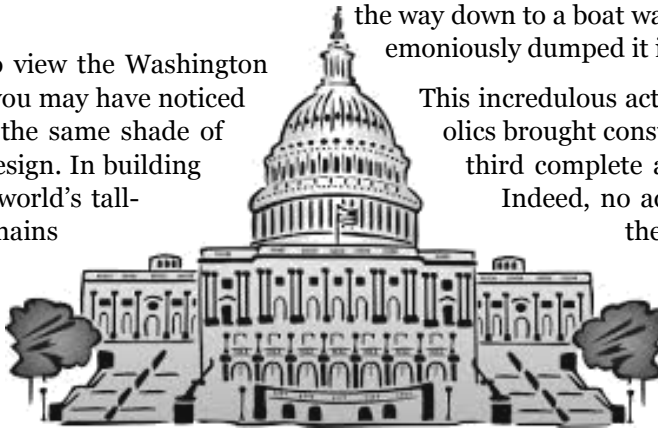
By Robin

If you've ever had a chance to view the Washington Monument on an overcast day, you may have noticed something peculiar. It's not all the same shade of white. Part of the reason is by design. In building what would briefly become the world's tallest man-made edifice (and remains to this day the world's tallest stone structure), the Washington National Monument Society solicited the assistance of the several states, foreign governments, and international dignitaries.

One and all were asked to contribute a single stone, or to provide enough money for the purchase of one. So not all of the stones are cut from the same type of rock (but they're either marble, granite, or bluestone gneiss).

One such dignitary who happily responded was Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) who sent a three-foot slab of "costly variegated marbles" recovered from ruins of the Temple of Concord in Rome (366 B.C.) and engraved with the words "From Rome."

The Pope's generous gift never made its way onto the monument. On March 5, 1854, under cloak of darkness, agents of the Know-Nothing party made their way to the base of the Monument, stole the Pope's stone, carried it all



the way down to a boat waiting on the Potomac, and unceremoniously dumped it in the middle of the river.

This incredulous act of bigoted hatred for Irish Catholics brought construction of the Monument (only a third complete at 150 feet) to a screeching halt.

Indeed, no additional work would be done to the obelisk for 23 years when, in 1877, work on the final two-thirds resumed in earnest.

Exposed as they were to more than twenty years of environmental impact, the bottom third of the Monument remains a darker, grayer hue of white—a testament in stone about the bitter fruits of prejudice and hate.

Fast forward 150 years and we are now witness to an event that would have been unthinkable even twenty years ago: an address to a joint session of Congress by the Bishop of Rome and leader of the Catholic Church whose official titles, among others, include "Vicar of Jesus Christ", "Successor of the Prince of the Apostles", and "Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church."

There are not just a few old bones rolling over in their graves. Rest assured that the "Know Nothings" have spun themselves into powder.

You may wonder what Pope Francis' recent address to Congress has to do with registrants, their families, and our efforts to restore constitutionally protected civil rights to both. The answer is, quite a lot.

While Pope Francis surely did not come straight out and declare that public sex offender registries are an affront to the Heavenly Host, he had quite a bit to say about being good neighbors and recognizing our cultural descent into an "us versus them" dichotomy of the "righteous" and the "sinner"...forgetting, as we so often do, that there is nary a saint who isn't also a sinner.

Consider, for example, Pope Francis' charge to our national representatives in the opening remarks of his speech:

You are called to **defend and preserve**

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Once you have chosen a country that will allow you to visit, it is helpful to learn about that country's local laws. Activities that would be illegal in that country may be legal in the United States, and vice versa. The U.S. State Department has a website that is helpful in learning about potential problems you may encounter once you enter a country.

Be Prepared for Your Return to the USA.

Some sex offenders experience no issues whatsoever while traveling internationally until they return to the United States. Often, travelers report that they have been delayed

for hours and forced into secondary screening while waiting to get back into the country because of their status.

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, and you are a person who travels frequently, consider filing a complaint with the Department of Homeland Security's Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP) to have the government review its information and make sure that you are not erroneously placed on a watch list. It's also a good idea to carry your attorney's contact information with you when you travel.

RSOL Letter Policy

We appreciate the many letters we receive from you, and we do respond to as many of them as possible. We ask that you adhere to the following guidelines when writing to us.

- Keep your letter short and on point (extremely long letters with extensive background are difficult for volunteers to decipher in terms of what you are asking);
- Print or use a typewriter if one is available at your institution;
- Only write on one side of standard size paper so that we may scan the document;
- Make sure that your address is visible on the letter because we do not retain the envelopes;
- We cannot answer letters asking what the registration laws are in a particular state;
- We cannot answer letters asking which state is best for sex offenders to reside in;
- We cannot answer letters seeking legal advice or opinions because no one here at RSOL is licensed to practice law.

Pope, from p. 8

the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good, for this is the chief aim of all politics." and "...you are asked to **protect, by means of the law, the image and likeness fashioned by God on every human face.**

Straight from the top we hear a summation of an ancient narrative as the Holy Father portrays Moses' responsibility as law-giver to the Hebrews. Law is not to be used as an instrument to destroy or disfigure. Just the opposite. Law is an instrument of good to be exercised with great care for the dignity of all people...not simply for the benefit of victims.

Francis chides Congress to recall the fundamental principle that, for thousands of years, has been the bedrock of Western law:

We need to avoid a common temptation nowadays: to discard whatever proves troublesome. Let us remember the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Mt 7:12).

Surely these words hit close to home. Are not registrants discarded? Are they not exiled as irredeemable reprobrates? Isn't the registry a tool to deal with our "troublesome" lot of souls? Who can argue otherwise?

Having intoned the very words of Christ, Francis presses in with what I believe was his most aggressive appeal on behalf of convicted persons and registered citizens:

Quotes of the Month:

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."

Thomas A. Edison

[E]very life is sacred, every human person is endowed with an inalienable dignity, and **society can only benefit from the rehabilitation of those convicted of crimes...**

...I also offer encouragement to all those who are convinced that **a**

just and necessary punishment must never exclude the dimension of hope and the goal of rehabilitation.

Clearly this is a Pope who understands that the protection of unborn children is not the full proclamation of the Gospel, and that it may very well be that the hardest cases among us—rapists, pedophiles, child molesters, and the like—are the most needful of redemption, restoration, mercy, and the love of a forgiving people.

Let us hold onto the hope that at least a few members of our otherwise spineless rubber-necking parliament of bores did more than hear the words of Pope Francis, but received them.

Can I hear an "Amen!"?

Freedom, from p. 1

for his medical and psychological conditions. Darren had been to the county branch for services prior to his conviction, so a file with his name was lying on the desk. As the specialist thumbed through the file, there, amongst all of the miscellaneous paperwork, was the newspaper article concerning Darren's crime.

Within minutes of having been told that he could receive financial assistance for food, deposit for rent, and utilities, Darren was quickly reminded that he still owes \$346.00 in court costs. It was then explained by the county specialist that, due to this monetary obligation, "It would be like robbing Peter to pay Paul," and that he was sorry but there was nothing he could do until the fine was paid—fairly tough to do as a recent ex-con with no job or home.

I felt immediate empathy for the humiliation he felt in being reminded so blatantly of a bitter past when he already had such little hope for the future. Neither serving in Afghanistan

nor being released from prison justifies assistance; however, leaving people to decay without much hope does not serve our communities well. Freedom, apparently, is not free.

Check Your Expiration Date!

We encourage you to monitor your expiration date because RSOL does not have the sophisticated software or volunteers to generate personalized notices of renewal.

The first batch of renewals are rapidly approaching on **November 1, 2015**.

We hope you agree that your subscription is worth the cost and renew for another term. Remember that the price is less for longer subscription periods.

Darren was noticeably frustrated but maintained his composure appropriately. He seems strong willed and at least has some emotional supports. Many people do not. As we left and I drove Darren back to the church where he is residing for a limited time, I was frustrated that society seemed not to comprehend that progress takes the efforts and help of so many.


ren has been told that he cannot stay long at the church. He is waiting on a fuel pump for his rusted truck so that he can live in it for a period of time. Maybe Darren is deserving of being humbled. Possibly I am, too, in experiencing this. And perhaps, just maybe, you—society—will begin to appreciate that behind many of those dangerous, awful people you know as sex offenders and criminals are persons who need to eat, need places to live, need ways to function as normally as possible.

There are those who believe all labeled as sex offenders should be killed. Those with more reason can look behind the sex offender and see the former offender, the veteran, the human being. Those with more reason understand that setting a former offender on the path to success benefits not only the individual but society as well.

Author's Note: Though County Veteran Service Commissions are a mandated entity, each county is independent in determining benefit eligibility. This article in no way reflects Veteran's Service Agencies in their entirety.

Due to insurance restrictions, Dar-

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Discretion, from p. 3

served, "It should have been apparent to a casual observer that she was clearly underage and vulnerable."

It is the defense attorney's job to sell the judge on why his/her client should be granted HYTA status; however, there certainly can be no guarantee of success. In this case, the court was not persuaded that Zack deserved the benefits of HYTA; thus, he did not grant it. My opinion is that we must be intellectually honest if we believe in judicial discretion; we must recognize that we will not always agree with how a particular judge chooses to exercise that discretion.

States, from p. 7

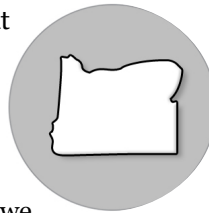
California man doing time in a “civil commitment” facility. He sent the man a copy of the interview, which proved immediately and highly popular with all the “residents” at the facility. Several other residents had copies made to pass along to their attorneys; though this is not confirmed, the program may serve as a source of information in several lawsuits attacking civil commitment in California. Another recent program helped bring members of several Arkansas groups advocating for prison reform together for the first time. Please keep spreading the word about “It Could Be You” and let ATAT know if any of you have suggestions about future guests and topics.

Oregon

As Oregon Voices moves toward becoming an official RSOL affiliate, perhaps it would be good to give a short synopsis of where we have been. We have been around since 2008 and our

efforts to date have been mutual support and legislative input.

Initially it was all defensive, testifying against bills to put all registrants on-line and legislate residency restrictions. That led to an interim legislative committee that produced a bill that used the Static99 to assess risk and place registrants on one of three levels, and which will give a path off the Registry, HB 2549. That was passed in 2013 but was not funded until 2015 and will not be implemented until 2019.



In the meantime, we played defense again in the 2015 legislature with over 30 bills that dealt, at least peripherally, with sex offender issues. The statute of limitations was increased, but most of the more extreme bills died in committee. Funding for 2549 was passed, but on the last

day of the session. It is now in the hands of the Parole Board who will soon form a committee to write the administrative rules to implement it. Oregon Voices hopes to have a seat on that committee.

At the same time, a subcommittee of the governor’s task force on re-entry is being established to develop a plan to educate Oregonians on the changes that 2549 will bring. A representative of OV has been asked to serve on that subcommittee. We hope that this can be an effective tool to begin to change public attitudes and to encourage the legislature to stop drafting one-size-fits-all legislation affecting persons on the registry and to begin to make distinctions built on risk levels. Late in the 2015 session, there were already a few steps in that direction.

Progress is slow, and often feels like one step forward and at least one back. But we have found allies across the political spectrum and that gives us hope.

Feminism, from p. 1

virtually destroyed because he wore, on camera, a shirt that portrayed female film stars wearing bathing suits. Bathing suits. He was bashed and ridiculed and demeaned by bloggers and tweeters across a wide spectrum. Feminists demanded his resignation if not his head on a platter. One male blogger with a wide readership wrote, “If he [Taylor] wore that shirt around female colleagues it was automatic sexual harassment anywhere in the US, and completely disrespectful to any woman in the room....”

<http://with-justiceforall.blogspot.com/2014/11/and-greatest-event-of-year-is-the.html>

What if one of the women scientists there had worn a blouse decorated with penises? What would that have been called? Courageous and empowering?

FAC Sues Seminole County, Florida

The Florida Action Committee has filed suit against Seminole County, challenging their proximity ordinance! A second county is about to get sued over their proximity ordinance as well, and we will announce that one after it is filed.



The ordinance prevents registrants from being present or traveling through an “exclusion zone,” making it practically (if not literally) impossible to make it from one end of the county to the other or perform routine tasks—such as banking, visiting family and friends, grocery shopping, or the countless other perfectly lawful activities citizens do in their daily lives—without violating the ordinance.

Similar ordinances have been struck down elsewhere, and we are hopeful for a similar result here. Read the rest of the press release here. <http://nationalrsol.org/blog/2015/09/16/florida-action-committee-sues-seminole-county-florida/>



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