

My name is Andrew Parish. I am 37 years old and have been a resident of the state of Kansas for most of my life. In 2006, at the age of 19, I was arrested for things that took place in 2003 and 2004, and 1 year later convicted via plea bargain of attempted indecent liberties with a child, as well as attempted solicitation of a child. I was sentenced to three years of supervised probation, completion of a sex offender treatment program at Prairieview Health in Newton, KS, and registration on the Kansas Sex Offender Registry for 10 years, and to be removed from the registry in January 2017. Importantly and worth note, the court determined that I was not a sexual predator, and I was spared incarceration.

I was grateful for the opportunity to avoid jail and committed myself to completing my probation without incident, as well as successfully completing the treatment program. I was determined to become a better person. Over the next several years, I attended treatment sessions six times a month while working as an HVAC installation technician, installing duct work in residential new construction. During this time, I was blessed to marry a woman who saw my potential and believed in my ability to change and grow, and she stood by me despite the hardships we faced. Together, we started to build a life, and we became young parents to our first child, my son, Judah. Even with the joy of becoming a husband and father, life was challenging—the financial cost of treatment was high, and the housing market crash of 2008 left me struggling to find steady work. My conviction made employment nearly impossible, limiting me to inconsistent work as a handyman or day laborer. Holding a steady job was nearly impossible, as background checks and registry requirements led to frequent job rejections. Yet my wife and I held on to hope. I was seeing tremendous growth from therapy and learning things about myself and my childhood that I had never before dealt with or faced, and we clung to the hope that in 2017, when I was removed from the registry as originally ordered, opportunities would finally open up for our family. Mainly, steady work and an income that could support our growing family.

However, in 2011, Kansas passed new laws retroactively extending my registration from 10 years to a lifetime of registration. My sentence was altered after the fact, and the hope that had carried me through those difficult years vanished. The impact of this decision has been devastating—not only for me but for my wife and children.

For the past 18 years, I have gone to my local Sheriff's office every 3 months and filled out paperwork and have had an updated picture posted on the internet. I have lived with the stigma and restrictions of the registry. I have been turned away from countless job opportunities despite being qualified, or even overqualified. I have had my membership to gyms revoked simply because of my name being on the registry. I have been unable to coach my children's sports teams, take them trick-or-treating, or even attend certain school or church events. I have been denied entry onto flights because my destination would not allow me to enter. In 2009, in the hopes of finding steady work I went into an Army recruiting office only to find that, that too was barred to me. I am limited in travel, unable to teach my children how to hunt, unable to donate blood, and unable to vote or serve on a jury- civic duties that I deeply believe in. I have lived in fear that neighbors will discriminate against my family or that my address will be flagged as a danger, simply because my name remains on this list. I worry that one day, a coworker or employer will find my name on the registry, and it will cost me everything I have worked so hard to rebuild. To most people, their opinion of me is limited to the convictions they read on the internet, and not based on who I am now as a person, or how far I have come from that teenage version of myself. They do not take into consideration all that I have accomplished over nearly two decades of hard work and determination. Accomplishments that I am not only proud of, but also, I believe show that I have

become a productive member of society. I am now the father of 4 children, all boys, and yes, the medical bills of four boys are second only to the grocery bills of four boys.

I have become an active member of my church and local community, with character references from pastors, police officers, lawyers, and business leaders. I started a business that ran for 7 years , creating jobs in the Wichita community, and am currently employed as a sales manager in business to business sales for one of the largest HVAC and building solutions company in the world. I have done everything I can to better myself and overcome the barriers that lifetime registration has put before me. Yet the registry remains as an ever-present threat to the continual growth and progress in mine and my family's journey.

I have spent 18 years proving that I am not a threat to society, yet I continue to be punished for the sins of my youth. Had the terms of my original sentence remained intact, I would have been removed from the registry in 2017, and my family's life would look very different today. I have never reoffended—never even been accused of a new crime—yet I still carry the label as a constant threat to the safety of our community.

I share my testimony today because I know that my story is not unique. Thousands of people across our state are trapped in a system that has drastically reduced the possibility of redemption. The registry, as it currently operates, does not distinguish between those who have been rehabilitated and those who remain a risk to society. It does not consider personal growth, commitment to change, or years of law-abiding behavior. Instead, it permanently brands individuals with a label that strips them of opportunities, dignity, and the ability to fully reintegrate into society.

To be clear, I am not anti-registration, anti-justice, or anti-protection of children. I believe in these things in the context of being pro-second chances, which I am. I am also pro-rehabilitation, pro-redemption, pro-change. I am pro-reform. I am pro common-sense law that both protects the innocent and offers redemption to those willing to work for it. Members of the committee, I urge you to support meaningful reform that restores hope to those who have worked tirelessly to rebuild their lives. Rehabilitation should be the goal of our justice system—not perpetual punishment. Please consider the impact that lifetime registration has on individuals and families who have already served their sentences and proven their commitment to change.

Again, I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Andrew Parish