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Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary Opposing of SB407
February 15, 2018

Chairman Wilborn and Committee Members,

The Johnson County Sheriff's Office opposes SB407 - Allowing certain violent offenders to shorten the duration of registration required under the Kansas offender registration act.

The Kansas Offender Registration Act exists to enhance public safety. It "is intended to provide the public with information regarding convicted offenders who could pose a threat to the safety of our families."¹

Persons required to register for fifteen (15) years are offenders who made a **conscious choice** to commit a violent crime. These are offenses that all cause serious bodily harm or death. These are not crimes that are committed by accident.

While we understand the intent of this bill is to alleviate some of the burden a convicted felon faces after release from prison when attempting to bridge the gap between incarceration and reintegration into society, this bill is a bridge too far. A crime victim's life will never be the same again – not in five years or fifteen years. Someone, or something, was taken from a crime victim that they can never replace. Victimization at the hands of another is a life changing trauma. To a victim, the criminal justice system seems to be all about the criminal. The criminal's rights must be protected. The victim's – not so much. In my two decades of law enforcement experience, and as a victim of violent crime myself, I've witnessed/experienced the criminal justice system's failings to the victims. It is better described as the CRIMINAL and just us (victim) system.

We are not suggesting that convicted felons be subject to criminal harassment for their past crimes nor do we condone that type of conduct. However, choices have consequences. If a person does not want to be required to register, there is a simple solution. Don't commit the

¹ Kansas Offender Registration Act Brochure, KBI, September 2016

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crime. If a person does not want to face an obstacle to obtaining employment, don't commit the crime.

Allowing a convicted felon who is required to register under this act to be removed at any time before they have fulfilled the requirements under the law is a slap in the face to the victims of these crimes. It's just one more way the system demonstrates that the criminal matters more than the victim.

The men and women of the Johnson County Sheriff's Office interact with crime victims every day. We see the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and financial carnage that these criminals cause to the victims. At least the one's still fortunate enough to be among the living. One of my duties is to meet with victims and help guide them through the criminal justice system – explaining what will happen. I try to prepare them for the "secondary assault" that comes from being exposed to the system as a crime victim.

The criminal chose to commit the crime. The victim didn't choose to be victimized. This bill victimizes the victim all over again. It's time the criminal JUSTICE system focuses on the victim and stops focusing on the criminal.

We respectfully ask the committee to oppose SB407.

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