

Advocates For Change



THE ADVOCATE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

AFC Mission Statement 1
 Growing Pains 1
 How to Measure Success... 1
 AFC Contact Information... 2
 AFC Members Meet with
 New Head of Parole 2
 People First Language 2
 Membership Report 2
 Legislation in a Nutshell... 3
 Meetings in Brief 3
 SOMB Update 3
 Upcoming Events 3
 Editorial Policy 3

AFC MISSION STATEMENT

AFC supports those with a sex offense and their families by:

- Advocating for change in sex offense laws and policies, and for the adherence to constitutional rights;
- Educating the public, lawmakers, and the judiciary;
- Promoting the successful treatment and reintegration of those with an offense into the community, thus reducing victimization and enhancing the safety of all.

Pardon Our Hiccups

We apologize for the delay in getting the newsletter to you. The AFC board and working members have been changing with new members coming into the group and others who have moved on. This has created changes in who does what. AFC is still working hard for you with the legislature and attending the many meetings of the state. The newsletter is late due to these organizational changes but we're working to get back on track so that we can keep you up to date.

How to Measure Success

A Message from the Chair

We at AFC work hard at many things and then wonder "did this do anything to help our cause". Our cause, of course, is justice for those with a sex offense who have been caught up in the legal system.

AFC members testify at hearings where bills are presented that pertain to those with a sex offense. We visit the officials at DOC telling them about problems from your perspective. We develop and distribute flyers to legislators and others stating the problems of those with a sex offense. We hold monthly meeting with speakers who can enlighten our membership on sex offense issues.

We attend meetings held by CCJJ and SOMB and provide input regarding the way things **are** as opposed to how they are often reported. We meet with legislators and explain the problems you are having. We attend Legislators' Town Hall meetings to make our presence known and bring up problems that are afflicting you. We attend the Parole Board Forum and keep up on what is going on with them. We publish a newsletter to help keep you informed.

How does that all lead to success? We have received many letters stating that nothing can improve in the SOTMP program unless Burl McCuller, Peggy Heil and Greig Vieder go. They are no longer with DOC and the words *No Known Cure* have been removed from statute. These changes are a measure of success.

External Evaluations have been done on SOTMP and SOMB . . . and there is pressure on them to follow the recommendations. Parole releases are up;

(continued on p 2)

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PEOPLE FIRST
LANGUAGE

AFC promotes and encourages the use of "people-first" language in which every person is acknowledged by their personhood first, and any issue or other aspect of that person second.

For example, instead of referring to someone as a *sex offender*, AFC encourages the use of a *person with a sex offense*. Similarly, AFC encourages the use of the term *sex offense laws* instead of *sex offender laws*.

Membership Report**As of May, 2014**

by C.J. Spencer,
Membership Chair

Family Members..... 175
Affected Members 413
Out of State..... 21
Total Membership..... 609

We're Getting Stronger!!!

(How to Measure Success . . . continued)

the parole department is being watched carefully is being pushed to make positive changes. Questions are being raised about the use of polygraphs and about the Lifetime Supervision Act. The removal of the words *No Known Cure*, and many other things, which we thought impossible to change a few years ago, have changed, are in the process of changing or are now being discussed as things needing to be changed. This is our best gauge of how to measure success.

We keep plugging away bit by bit and wish things would happen faster. . . but at least they are going in the right direction.

*Carolyn Turner, Chair
Advocates for Change*

AFC Members Meet with New Head of Parole

by Maxine Powers

Several AFC members met with the new head of Parole for CDOC, Walt Pesterfield in April. This was an introductory meeting to get to know a bit about Mr. Pesterfield and his philosophy for parole. He introduced himself by telling us about the progressive program he implemented in Oregon using Evidence Based Practices. He also said that he believed that people can change their behavior; so in this regard, his philosophy aligns with that of CDOC Executive Director, Rick Raemisch. Mr. Pesterfield is bringing a pilot program to Colorado that is evidenced based and has been proven effective in addressing violations. He plans to address the lack of "in-between" interventions to maintain accountability without sending almost everyone with a technical violation back to prison.

According to Mr. Pesterfield, DOC will be introducing new policies for parole. He feels that the role of parole officers primarily should be to help offenders succeed. However, he acknowledged that this will not be an overnight process. DOC intends to provide classes to parole officers covering topics such as how to help offenders succeed, effective communication, and motivational interviewing.

Mr. Pesterfield also said that DOC will be implementing a change in case manager duties in the prisons. The plan is for case managers to function strictly as case managers, working with offenders and getting them into the right programs. It is anticipated that the case load ratio of case managers to offenders will go down, allowing case managers to be more effective.

AFC provided background information on our organization and discussed specific issues that parolees have been facing. We were told that CDOC Deputy Executive Director, Kellie Wasco, worked with at least one treatment provider to address the issue of a parolee having to start over again in treatment. Continuity of treatment from prison to parole is an issue that is now on DOC's radar.

AFC is looking forward to productive relationship with Mr. Pesterfield and his parole organization . . . one which will encourage an open flow of communication in both directions.

LEGISLATION IN A NUTSHELL

HB 1355 invests close to \$8 million into parole reforms to better supervise offenders being released from prison. District Attorneys and the Public Defender's Office are receiving additional resources.

HB 1273 overhauls our criminal laws that deal with Human Trafficking and creates a statewide council to combat this often hidden and pervasive problem.

SB 64 changes state prison policies for placing offenders with mental illness in solitary confinement. It charts a course to transition to a different approach. It's an important bill that won near-unanimous approval.

SOMB Update

Peggy Heil is no longer a member of the SOMB as a result of leaving the Department of Corrections and accepting new employment at the Division of Criminal Justice.

Upcoming Events

Citizens Advocacy Meeting – June 4, 2014

More info: <http://www.doc.state.co.us/citizen-advocate-meetings>

Editorial Policy

The Advocate newsletter is published by Advocates for Change. We provide information on our efforts to affect change in legislation, treatment, and re-integration into the community, primarily for those who have been convicted of a sex offense.

Submissions from inmates/offenders and parolees are encouraged. Please limit articles to 300 words. Content should be about a single issue, be original, and accurate, citing sources if appropriate. Authors will be identified by first name only if requested.

AFC makes no representation as to the accuracy of any submission and does not necessarily endorse the opinions of any author. Nothing offered by AFC is intended to be legal advice, and any information provided should never be a substitute for obtaining counsel and/or conducting your own research.

The editor reserves the right to publish all, part or none of the contributions submitted. Send contributions for publication and/or comments on the newsletter to: Advocates for Change, Newsletter Editor, PO Box 103392, Denver, CO 80250.

MEETINGS IN BRIEF

by Ann Harris

SOMB, Friday, February 21, 2014 – The External Evaluation Report was discussed with a list of 29 cited topics from the report. SOMB says they are working to address the changes that might need to be made as a result of the report. There were several victim advocates at the meeting who expressed a strong dissatisfaction with the report. AFC made the point that the SOMB's 2013 LSA report states that .7% recidivate within one year and 2.6% recidivate within three years. The SOMB's own numbers suggest that the dollars spent are misused based the low recidivism rates.

Parole Board Meeting. March 27, 2014 - The room was full of people with sex offense issues. Board members were asked if the recidivism rate is so low, why are they reluctant to parole. The responses were varied, but in general, parole board members believe even when there is only one conviction offense, there are many more that have not been reported without the benefit of the polygraph. We feel the board needs to be educated with regard to varying types of people classified as sex offenders. When discussing the lack of continuum of treatment from prison to parole, Denise Balazic, parole board member, saw a real problem.

9News Appointments, March 19, 2014 - AFC met with 9News Investigative Reporter, Melissa Blasius. The meeting and recorded interview with 9News focused on treatment for those with a sex offense. Our interview was centered around the external evaluations, treatment, and lack of hope. AFC told 9News that although "No Known Cure" has been removed from legislation, the SOMB Standards and Guidelines still use it as a component of the policy. The 9News story that aired on May 7 had the headline: "Most Colorado Sex offenders Don't Get Treated In Prison" [before they are let out to the streets] Once again the media resorted to sensationalism and fear tactics to boost their audience ratings.

CCJJ – Sex Offender Working Group, Ongoing Monthly Meetings – The **SO Working Group** has been charged with returning to the original task of coming up with a Felony class 4 Determinate (if possible) and also a procedure for early termination from lifetime supervision (if possible). We will follow this group closely and update as we received more information. The group has had discussions about the difficulty of selecting just one F4 because there is a need for revisions across the entire classification scheme.

JOIN US

Membership Fee is \$20 for family membership, \$5 per year for returning citizens, and 8 stamps for those on the inside. Any additional donations are gratefully accepted.

Today's Date: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

**Call 720-329-9096. If you have any questions or comments.
Please feel free to share an application with a friend or a family member.
Send membership applications to: AFC Membership, P. O. Box 103392 Denver, CO 80250**