



THE ADVOCATE

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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.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE AFC CHAIR

The Legislative season has come to an end and it's been an exciting one for AFC. After years of explaining, defining, complaining, asking, hoping, you name it; we have had a successful year thanks to our members and the hard work done by Rep. Leslie Herod. HB18-1427, Concerning a Prohibition of Conflict of Interest on the SOMB. When the bill went through the Joint Judiciary Committee, both sides of the issue were heard and unbelievably the bill passed without opposition. It was startling after years of no movement. But, AFC and other advocates have stayed focused and made the facts known and the words heard. On third reading the bill passed and moved on for signature by the Governor. The bill, however, was vetoed and not signed. There was another bill HB18-1198 that "requires each statutorily created board or commission in state government to implement written polices and obtain annual training on specified issues in order to ensure the best practices utilized....." This bill had similarities to HB18-1427 but did get the attention of the Governor. The Governor did indicate he had concerns about the way that the SOMB had been operating and was supportive of a Legislative Audit. Rep. Herod also indicated she was not done with this issue.

In addition to the bill, AFC is working on getting a state audit started for the SOMB. The SOMB has been around for too many years and there has never been any kind of accountability study done. Oversight is an important tool in any organization and board's can lose sight of the mission without taking a look back. With the Governor's approval of an audit and passing through the first review by the Legislative Audit Committee, it looks an audit might happen.

The year has started off with a bang and as we continue we hope to hold the momentum. It's so good to finally see progress and there are many to thank for making this happen.

Pat Harris, Chair, Advocates for Change

AFC is all volunteer; no one receives a salary. In fact, our core Breakfast Action Group (BAG) members cover many of our expenses out of pocket; expenses which keep growing. We at AFC appreciate your support and renewing your memberships or donating on a timely basis. New members are always welcome.

Hickenlooper vetoes bill to reduce conflicts of interests on Colorado's sex-offender management board

Governor says qualified experts would have been excluded from panel

Editor's Note: The below article is reprinted from the Denver Post of June 4, 2018

Gov. John Hickenlooper on Monday vetoed legislation that would have barred members of the Colorado Sex Offender Management Board from being able to profit from multi-million-dollar state contracts related to their work.

House Bill 1427 would have prevented members of the board, which decides how the state's sex offenders are managed, from having direct financial benefits from the standards and guidelines that it adopts. Hickenlooper, in a letter to legislators, explained that while he supported "proper handling of conflicts" by the board, he believed the legislation was "redundant and overbroad."

The legislation had attracted bipartisan support from legislators concerned over media reports about professional polygrapher Jeff Jenks' role on the board. As a member of the 25-person board, Jenks played an influential role last year in writing the rules for how his profession administers polygraphs to sex offenders. Sponsoring legislators included Leslie Herod, D-Denver; Cole Wist, R-Centennial and Jerry Sonnenberg, R-Sterling.

"We're very disappointed," Herod said in an interview. "This is hugely problematic for the reputation of state of Colorado when a bill is vetoed, allowing people to serve with huge conflicts."

Herod said she and Wist would continue to try to pass the legislation next year.

Members of victims' rights groups had lobbied for the veto, arguing that the legislation would prevent individuals with expertise in the area of treating and managing sex offenders from serving on the board. Hickenlooper said in his letter that he agreed that "the bill bars from serving on the board some of the very individuals most familiar with treatment modalities."

But he added that "recent media reports raise important issues as to the need for better conflict management." He said in the letter that he was directing the board to conduct a thorough review of rules and policies pertaining to conflicts of interest, and to train board members on identifying and handling potential conflicts.

The Denver Post reported that Colorado will pay Jenks' Wheat Ridge polygraph firm, Amich & Jenks Inc., up to \$1.9 million to polygraph sex offenders from 2010 to 2020, according to state contracts. Critics of that

arrangement, including legislators, said such financial considerations had stymied efforts to reform how sex offenders are managed in Colorado.

The board rules recommend that sex offenders on parole take polygraphs every six months to determine whether they are adhering to the terms of their release. Those rules also recommend that sex offenders who have an inconclusive or deceptive finding on a polygraph be tested again every 60 days — at a cost of \$250 each test — until they pass.

The rate of polygraphs of sex offenders in Colorado has come under criticism. A team of consultants in 2013 reported that offenders maintained they were pressured while undergoing polygraphs to make up past offenses.

Much of the discussion about the legislation centered on Jenks, but other members of the board also would have been affected if Hickenlooper had signed it into law. Norma Aguilar-Dave, appointed to the board in June 2016, is the executive director of Savio House, which provides services to juvenile offenders who have committed sexual offenses. Since 2016, Savio House was paid \$12.78 million through a state contract administered by the Colorado Department of Human Services. Another board member, Missy Gursky, who was appointed in 2006, is a clinical director at RSA Inc., a sex offender treatment provider. RSA was paid \$2.4 million by the state since 2016.

State will seek independent review of Colorado sex offender management board after veto

Editor's Note: The below article was posted on the DenverChannel.com website on June 5, 2018:

A day after Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper vetoed legislation aimed at eliminating perceived conflicts of interest on the state's Sex Offender Management Board, the state announced it will seek an independent review of the board and its operations.

Gov. Hickenlooper vetoed House Bill 18-1427 on Monday, calling the legislation "redundant and overbroad" and citing concerns that such a law could remove needed experts from state boards and commissions.

The Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB) sets the standards for supervision and treatment of convicted sex offenders in Colorado. HB18-1427 would have prevented members of that board from profiting from the policies they help to set, including banning members from entering into contracts for sex offender treatment with the state.

The bill's sponsors cited reporting by Contact7 Investigates which showed one board member, polygraph examiner Jeff Jenks, consistently collected the

largest share of public money spent on sex offender polygraph tests while he sat as chair of the board's polygraph committee that set testing standards for offenders.

Gov. Hickenlooper said at a news conference Tuesday it is clear there are important issues around conflicts of interest that need to be addressed, but he thought the bill was the wrong way to do it.

"We heard the point loud and clear," Hickenlooper said. "I guarantee you they will be going through not just the sex offender board, but every board, to make sure everyone understands what a conflict of interest is."

Rep. Leslie Herod, D-Denver, who is one of the bill's sponsors, said she had no warning a veto was coming.

"Not only do we have bipartisan support on this measure, so it will come back, we also had support from the district attorneys who prosecute sex offenders. And we also have support from the ACLU on the other side of things. It's very rare that we all can come together and agree on one bill. We did on this one. And a veto was out of line," Herod told Denver7 Tuesday. "We should've been given a chance to have a conversation."

State orders independent review

The Colorado Department of Public Safety (CDPS), which oversees the SOMB, issued a statement Tuesday regarding the veto.

The department said it agrees "conflicts of interest should play no role in the decisions being made by governing bodies" and it "[takes] very seriously the concerns raised by sex offender advocates and the sponsors of HB 18-1427."

In its statement, CDPS said it will "immediately undertake a thorough review of the SOMB's rules and policies" regarding conflicts of interest.

CDPS also said it would seek an independent review of the SOMB's policies, procedures and conduct from a third-party evaluator to present to legislators in 2019.

"The SOMB is effective because of the vast wealth of knowledge and perspective provided by the 25 experts who give their time to serve on the board. So we take very seriously the need to preserve their ability to provide expertise while also honoring our commitment to fair, transparent, conflict-free governance. We are always open to opportunities to further enhance the Board's ability to effectively promote public safety in a manner that inspires confidence and trust from all stakeholders," CDPS executive director Stan Hilkey said in the statement.

Victim advocates applaud veto

Advocates for victims testified against HB18-1427 and one of the state's top victims rights organizations applauded Gov. Hickenlooper's decision to veto the bill.

Sterling Harris, chief deputy director of the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance, told Denver7 Tuesday her organization is pleased with Hickenlooper's decision.

"This bill was overly broad. It had the potential to strip the expertise that makes the board effective completely from the SOMB. It had the potential to kick off all the treatment providers from the board, the polygrapher spot from the board, the sex assault victim advocate from the board, because those are people who could be construed as having some kind of monetary conflict of interest," Harris said.

Harris said her organization believes the legislation was "rushed through" at the end of the legislative session, and the process did not allow all stakeholders to discuss the potential impacts of the bill in front of the legislators who voted to pass the legislation.

"We're talking about convicted sex offenders. These are very different than other types of criminals," Harris said. "At the end of the day, we worried that if all the expertise on this board were taken away –like if you had people who were maybe all retired, who maybe had been very active in the field at one time but maybe had lost touch with some of the best practices –ultimately that would lead to erosion of the board's effectiveness, erosion of the standards that are crucial for monitoring."

Herod, the bill's sponsor, said her efforts to raise concerns about the SOMB will not stop with the veto of HB18-1427.

"That does not mean this is over. We are moving forward to submit a request for an audit of the entire SOMB ... to see exactly where all of the issues lie. The conflict of interest piece was just one small piece. Right now we've got the [fox] guarding the henhouse and it has to stop," Herod said.

Scam Alert

Scams offering to get someone off the registry for a fee have been around for a while. A new scam has appeared within the past few months, and as of this writing has targeted registrants in some form in at least four states: Texas, Oklahoma, Ohio, Colorado, and New Mexico, with New Mexico being the most recent. All involve telephone calls to registrants claiming to be from someone at the registry office or police department and claiming the registrant is somehow out of compliance. From there the verbiage goes in one of several directions. Some are told to bring cash to the registry office. Some have details about the registrant and his past and his family and use threats. Some claim to have planted evidence of a new crime and threaten imminent arrest if instructions aren't obeyed. Some

haven't asked for cash but told the registrant to go to the registry office immediately.

Local law enforcement in Arlington, TX opened a case as a terroristic threat, impersonating a police officer, and extortion. Officials in New Mexico said neither the police or registry officials would make such a telephone call.

So be aware. If you get any calls from anyone claiming to be officials and saying that you are in trouble in some way and need to go somewhere, don't do it. Capture the phone number if you can and call your local law enforcement and registry office.

Senate committee turns down bill to change indefinite sentencing for sex offenders

By Marianne Goodland A originally reported by Colorado Politics

Monday, Feb. 12, 2018 8:33 PM

The Senate Judiciary Committee Monday voted down a bill that would change the state's laws on indefinite sentencing for sex offenders. The measure, Senate Bill 17, would allow judges to determine on a case-by-case basis whether to sentence sex offenders to "indeterminate sentences," which in some cases means a life sentence.

The issue of indeterminate sentencing most recently came up in 2016 when a Boulder man, Austin Wilkerson, was sentenced to two years of work release and 20 years on probation after being convicted of raping a young woman in 2014. According to the [Boulder Daily Camera](#), Wilkerson could have received from four to 12 years for the crime. But the crime also falls under the state's lifetime supervision act, meaning Wilkerson could have gone to prison for life with the possibility of parole. Some judges have been hesitant to impose prison time because of that.

Part of the problem, according to Republican Sen. Kevin Lundberg of Berthoud, is that the treatment programs that would allow sex offenders to go through treatment and then be released under the act don't exist.

"What should be a safety value ends up akin to a lifetime sentence for a crime that doesn't call for it," and "that's not justice," Lundberg told the Senate Judiciary Committee Monday.

As a result, some judges have figured out how to change the charge other than what the actual crime was, to avoid the indeterminate sentencing rule, and that's not justice either, he said.

A judge should have the prerogative to say whether it's appropriate or not, Lundberg said in a committee hearing last month. The bill wouldn't have eliminated the indeterminate sentencing provisions of the law, Lundberg explained; it just would give judges more options.

The General Assembly has tried for several years to find a way to resolve the problems in the indeterminate sentencing act.

The bill was supported by the Office of the State Public Defender and the Colorado Criminal Defense Bar, based on concerns that low-level offenders were subject to lifetime sentences. Almost no one gets sentenced under the lifetime supervision law, according to Laurie Rose Kepros from the Office of State Public Defender. That's partly because the law includes criteria that an offender meet certain benchmarks in treatment. The problem, she said, is that these offenders have to get into treatment, but the state is unable to meet that need. As a result, about 1,500 people are on the referral list who are within four years of parole eligibility but unable to get treatment, and high-risk individuals who reach parole eligibility get out without treatment. That increases the chances of reoffending and becomes a danger to public safety.

But the bill drew strong opposition from district attorneys, victims' advocate groups and victims of sexual assault, and it also raised constitutional concerns during an earlier Jan. 31 hearing. Amanda Gall, representing the Colorado District Attorneys' Council, said judges do not have enough information about sex offenders to make discretionary sentencing decisions.

"It's not that I oppose judges having discretion; as the law is written now, they have ultimate discretion," said Katharine Booth, also representing the DA's Council. But she added that the way the bill is written that an unintended consequence could produce reduced sentences.

The bill was laid over at the time to allow Lundberg time to work out amendments. But it wasn't enough; the committee chairman, Republican Sen. Bob Gardner of Colorado Springs, said he had "thousands" of objections to the bill, and the committee's three Republicans, including Sen. Don Coram of Montrose, all voted against it, killing the bill.

A class from Pagosa High School, which has been studying the issue, was present for Monday's vote. Coram told Lundberg that he appreciated his intentions but the bill didn't hit the "sweet spot" of finding cooperation between the district attorneys and the public defenders. Coram later told Colorado Politics that the students from Pagosa High also agree that the bill isn't there yet. Coram joked, sort of, that he's considering either locking up both sides for 10 months to work out their differences, or more likely, to ask for an interim committee during the summer to come up with a viable solution, although Monday's bill also came from an interim committee from last summer.

Help Finding a Support Person

AFC constantly gets letters from people seeking help finding a support person. We understand that a support person is integral to getting offered parole and facilitating a successful transition upon release and how difficult it is for those on the inside with little or no contacts on the outside. We want to help but we need your help as well.

A typical letter from a person on the inside starts with a LENGTHY description of their case, how they were handled by the judicial system and, often, an EXTENSIVE

background of the person's life before they were arrested and convicted. After that the letter ends with something like "...can you help me find a support person?" See what I mean? Not a lot to work with there. Put yourself in the role of the potential support person for a moment. How are they to determine, based on what you wrote, whether you are a good candidate for support? We can give your letter to a potential support person and they can begin the LONG process of asking questions, receiving responses, asking follow up questions and so on but we think there is a better way. We are so convinced the method we are about to describe is the best approach that, in the future, whenever we get a request for a support person, we will send the person writing the letter a copy of this article and say "get to work and we will help you." Don't worry. We are not going to leave you hanging alone. We are about to explain WHAT to do and give some helpful hints on HOW to do it. Bottom line though is it's up to you. If you want our help, you've got to give us something we can work with.— How you present yourself is very important.

What we are talking about is a letter from you stating why you feel you are an excellent candidate for a support person to consider. Think of it as a resume, a job interview or a sales pitch. All will get you in the right frame of mind for what you are about to do. Also, spend some time putting yourself in the role or mind of the support person. What would YOU, if you were that person want to know about you. Imagine this potential support person has 5, 10 or even 30 letters to consider but can only choose one. What will make them pick yours? Here are some helpful hints to get you started:

- Be thorough but be brief. A 15-page letter is not the best way to start this sort of relationship. 2-3 pages would be about the maximum. Tell what your conviction was, what your sentence is, how much time you have served so far and when you are due for your first/next parole hearing. All those other details you think are pertinent can come at some other time. We are not saying they are irrelevant. You need to focus on what the support person needs to know immediately to consider you. Which brings us to...
- **This letter needs to be truthful, accurate and genuine.** Don't try to solicit sympathy or pity. We already know you are in a bad place. We already know that you might have come from an even worse place in the past. As your support, we plan to help you focus on the present and tomorrow, not yesterday. If you think it helps you to share important parts of your past, do it in such a way that you can show growth and maturity from the experience not to gain sympathy. When you talk about the negative aspects of your personality such as your history of drug and alcohol problems, do it with an attitude like "I have struggled with anger in the past but I am learning that it has caused me nothing but problems, so I am working on letting it go." If you don't believe in you, why should we?
- What do you bring to the potential relationship with the support person? Think of it as a job interview

with a positive presentation. What is positive about you that we can help with? Job skills, good attitude, positive feelings about the future, how you have helped others? What have you done to better yourself: classes, learned a language, read some books, etc. Yes, it's a scary world out there but there is a lot of good too. You having a positive attitude about YOUR future is necessary.

- We most likely know what your basic needs are. If you are like everyone else, you need an ID, a job, a place to live, some food to get by and a friend to lean on when it gets overwhelming. If you have special needs beyond those, please share them and demonstrate that you are only looking for **assistance**, not someone to carry you.
- We can't stress enough this is more about attitude than anything else. If you are positive about your future, so will we be. So will any potential parole board member, employer or even loved one. You've got to think of this as a presentation about yourself, accurate, truthful and genuine. Ask yourself "Why should we (the support person) select you over other candidates?"

We know you've been spending a lot of time in there thinking about yourself and your future. Your thoughts are floating around and bouncing off everything. This letter will help you gel those thoughts into something coherent and directed. It's not a spelling contest and you won't be graded on skipping a comma or two. It's a way for you to put all those thoughts in order and make yourself ready to present them to others. You will be surprised with the positive results this letter that you've created will bring you. With this letter under your belt and in your mind, your communications with the parole board, parole officer, employers, friends and family will be easier because you've taken the time to pull your thoughts together and put them on paper. Take your time. Make sure it says everything that NEEDS to be said without a lot of stuff that could just get in the way. Your focus is on the present, looking toward the future. Convince EVERYONE, (including yourself), that you are up for what lies ahead.

Editor's Note: The below article is representative of several dozen that have been published this year alone in just about every major newspaper and publication (including Time magazine) about the registry and sex offender issues.

Coast to Coast, Sex Offender Residency Restrictions Waste Money, Create Havoc

by Sandy Rozek published in Criminal Legal News June, 2018,

If every shred of evidence showed that traffic lights, while costing large amounts of resources to install, did nothing to decrease auto accidents and actually created a host of undesirable consequences, would cities still install them at every major intersection?

This is exactly what happens with the creation of what are euphemistically called "child safety zones."

The emergence of sex-offender registration and notification laws in the mid-1990s created awareness of convicted sexual offenders living throughout communities and neighborhoods. This led to the notion that restricting these individuals from living (and often from just being) within close proximity to areas where children congregate would help prevent the sexual victimization of children. Today, 35 states have statewide residency restrictions, and many of the others allow individual jurisdictions to establish them.

This ignores the most basic fact about child molestation, a fact that has long been known but largely ignored: Children are not sexually abused by strangers lurking in parks and school playgrounds. Virtually all molestation of children is committed by those in the children's lives in trusted positions, the majority in private residences.

The clamor for residency restrictions

Every month, new communities demand the creation of these "protected" areas for children. These are prominent headlines from the past few months.

In New York: "Cuomo seeks 1000-foot boundary for sex offenders around schools";

In Maine: "Lawmakers seek to close loophole on residency restrictions for registered sex offenders";

In Florida: "Possible ordinance would limit where sex offenders can live"; and

In California: "Vidak authors measure to limit where sex offenders can live"

Research shows these laws to be ineffective

The first research study done (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2007), showed that residency restrictions would not have prevented any re-offenses.

Since then, numerous studies — academic, private, and governmental — have been done. Not one has shown a different result.

California is one of the more prominent states for establishing these restrictions. Yet their own Sex Offender Management Board makes this statement: "There is no research which supports the use of these strategies [residency and proximity restrictions], there is substantial research showing that such policies have no effect on preventing recidivism, and there is a growing body of research which indicates that residence restrictions actually increase sex offender recidivism [for violations and petty crime, not for re-offense] and decrease community safety." An academic study published in Sage Journals (2002) by experts in the field concludes: "... the residence restriction policy was not associated with a meaningful change in sex crime arrests or sex offender recidivism after the policy implementation date, suggesting that the residence restriction did not achieve its intended goal of reducing recidivism."

Likewise, a comprehensive Department of Justice study, published in July 2015, states, "[T]he evidence is fairly clear that residence restrictions are not effective. In fact, the

research suggests that residence restrictions may actually increase offender risk by undermining offender stability and the ability of the offender to obtain housing, work, and family support. There is nothing to suggest this policy should be used at this time."

And finally, Kansas Department of Corrections officials are so strongly opposed to sex offender residency restrictions that they devote a full page on their website to enumerating and explaining 20 reasons why.

Problems, problems, problems

Aside from wasting resources on policy that does not even address the problem it is intended to solve and creating conditions that interfere with offender stability and rehabilitation, new problems have emerged.

2006 was the year that Tulsa, Oklahoma, implemented residency restrictions. "2006 just turned our world upside down, prior to that we had 15 to 20 (failure to register) violations a year. Since that we have hundreds of violations a year," stated Sgt. John Adams of the Tulsa Police Department. "Legislators felt that if we put all of this off limits, they'll just move out of state. That didn't happen, they just stopped registering," Adams continued. He noted that prior to 2006 there were about 680 registered sex offenders, but now, there are fewer than 400.

In California, communities found a huge increase in its homeless sex offender population. "Within five years of passage of a law that restricts where sex offenders can live, the number of them listed as transient had risen from 88 to 1,986." Tom Tobin, vice chairman of the California Sex Offender Management Board, trying to explain why clearly contradicted policy is implemented, said, "We do things that are not so wise, because we want to do something."

And in Michigan, homelessness and registry compliance are not the only problems. Homelessness means no available source of electricity, required on a regular basis for charging GPS systems, which some on the registry are required to wear.

"DOC records show some homeless offenders avoid this logistical challenge by absconding — removing their bracelets or letting them run out of power — which completely defeats the purpose of GPS monitoring."

A totally failed system

Compelling logical, factual reasons to totally abolish distance restrictions in residence and presence for those required to be on sex-offender registries include: (1) absolutely no validation from empirical evidence; (2) conditions which contradict every valid opinion and statistic about rehabilitation; (3) a complete failure in solving the problem it is intended to address; and (4) the creation of problems that cause a decrease in public safety and destroy lives.

What are we waiting for?

How Texas created a new for-profit lockup, which it really doesn't want you to call a "prison."

by Michael Barajas

In early September 2015, guards fanned out across Texas with orders to round up about 200 men, rousing some from bed as early as 3 a.m. and demanding they stuff whatever they wanted to keep into black Hefty bags.

The men weren't hard to find. They'd all completed lengthy prison sentences for sex crimes. The state calls them "sexually violent predators," men required not only to publicly register their whereabouts but also to participate in a court-ordered monitoring and treatment program meant to cure them of "behavior abnormalities" and safely integrate them back into society after they've done their penance. At the time of the roundup, most were living in boarding homes and halfway houses.

Jason Schoenfeld, who was staying at a Fort Worth halfway house at the time, made a frantic phone call to his friend John, a fellow veteran. John, who's retired and old enough to be Schoenfeld's father, met the 46-year-old Gulf War veteran while volunteering at the Fort Worth VA hospital. John taught Schoenfeld breathing techniques to calm his nerves during an exercise class he'd volunteered to lead at the VA; records show the VA gave Schoenfeld a 30 percent disability rating for post-traumatic stress disorder after his combat service. John eventually grew fond of Schoenfeld and wanted to help him, even after learning his new friend had served an 18-year prison sentence for aggravated sexual assault of a child.

John keeps a box of letters his friend has sent him since being shipped to the Littlefield facility.

John says he heard desperation in Schoenfeld's voice as he asked whether John could come grab his stuff before it ended up in a dumpster. "It was clear he didn't have anybody else," John told me. He says Schoenfeld looked confused to the point of tears when John and his wife arrived at the halfway house. "We didn't even know what city he was going to," John says. Schoenfeld gave him two bulging garbage bags; John now stores them in his home.

Schoenfeld and the others were frisked, loaded onto vans and prison buses and driven hundreds of miles to Littlefield, a remote, sparsely populated corner of the Texas Panhandle, where guards shuffled them into the Bill W. Clayton Detention Center, a prison that had been empty for six years.

Once inside those old prison walls, the men surrendered their IDs, Social Security cards, birth certificates and credit cards, along with cash and coins. Guards dug through the Hefty bags, tossing out all sorts of personal items now considered contraband. They went from living in halfway houses that looked like motels to windowless cells with cinderblock walls, hard steel bunks and metal toilets. But officials at the detention center were adamant: This wasn't a

prison. They instructed the men to call their living quarters "rooms," not prison cells.

Unlike at the halfway houses, the new inmates couldn't come and go. It wasn't clear when their sentences would end, if ever.

Two and a half years after the Texas Civil Commitment Center opened its doors, only five men have been released — four of them to medical facilities where they later died.

State officials claim Texas' new civil commitment program is designed to rehabilitate the men. But their families and friends argue the state has simply stashed them in a for-profit prison on the outskirts of the state, far away from the support services they'll need if there's any hope of transitioning back into society — the supposed goal of the facility. Lawyers who represent them consider the state's new program an unconstitutional extension of the prison sentences the men have already served.

Parole from Another Perspective – Kentucky

I recently read the letter from John in Nebraska. I, too, am living a healthy and productive lifestyle. After enduring the extremely restrictive and suppressive treatment programs in Colorado, I moved to Kentucky and I managed to successfully complete all my parole requirements; i.e. once a week treatment meeting, safety plans for any activity, needing an accountability partner and the list goes on.

Since moving to Kentucky on an interstate Compact I enjoy freedoms that I would never be granted in Colorado. As a matter of fact, I was once told by a Colorado therapist "Your life will never be yours again". I completed the sex offender treatment program required by Kentucky in approximately one year with no requirements to continue any program. I am permitted contact with all of my family members. I can travel statewide simply by informing my parole officer. I meet with my parole officer once a month.

The therapist I had was extremely supportive while helping me understand the reasons behind my offense and steps I can take to prevent relapse. This helped me regain respect for myself and built confidence in me. I completed treatment with a strong feeling of empathy for my victim and compassion for all people.

I lead a healthy lifestyle and awake every morning happy and look forward to starting my day. This was something I never felt while in Colorado. My days always started with a feeling of dread.

In closing I wanted you and John to know that I can relate to the same experiences he enjoys and those that he does not.

..

Editorial Policy

The Advocate 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. 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.

Submissions from inmates/offenders, parolees, and members, are encouraged. Please limit articles to 300 words. 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.

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