

Cliff Richardson
Molalla, OR
cliff.richardson.1976@gmail.com

March 6, 2025

Senate Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Opposition to Senate Bill 819

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I'm writing to you today not just as a concerned citizen, but as someone whose family has lived through the painful consequences of a broken system. Senate Bill 819 would allow the State Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision and the Psychiatric Security Review Board to make decisions about sex offender risk levels and reporting requirements without a full hearing. This bill strips away accountability and makes it even easier for convicted sex offenders to slip through the cracks. That is unacceptable.

A Personal Story: When the System Fails

My niece was sexually assaulted by a member of our own family. It was a devastating betrayal, and we did everything we could to make sure justice was served. But the system failed us at every turn. Because he was a juvenile at the time, we were told he wouldn't have to register as a sex offender when he turned 18. When his petition to avoid registration was denied, we were relieved—until we were told he could reapply every two years. Then, despite the seriousness of his crime, we were told his classification level wasn't high enough for him to be placed on the registry. It felt like a gut punch. My niece had to live with what happened every day, but he was given chance after chance to erase it from his record.

This bill will only create more stories like ours. It prioritizes the comfort of offenders over the rights of victims. How can we allow that?

Why This Bill Is Dangerous

1. **It Weakens Public Safety**
 - Right now, risk classifications exist to warn communities about dangerous individuals. SB 819 would allow offenders to have their risk levels reduced or be removed from the registry without a formal hearing—meaning less oversight, less transparency, and more risk to the public.
2. **It Silences Victims**

- The bill removes automatic hearings, forcing victims and their families to constantly monitor offenders and fight to keep them on the registry. This puts the burden on those already traumatized instead of holding offenders accountable.
- 3. **It Lets Offenders Off the Hook Too Easily**
 - Under SB 819, a Level 3 sex offender (the highest risk) can apply to be a Level 2 after just 10 years, and a Level 2 offender can become a Level 1, eventually being removed from the registry altogether.
 - There's no requirement for long-term proof of rehabilitation—just a single petition.
- 4. **It Takes the Power Away from Law Enforcement & Communities**
 - This bill allows reclassifications to be handled **administratively**, meaning decisions could be made behind closed doors. That means law enforcement, victims, and the public could have **no say** in whether someone remains on the registry.

A System That Works for Offenders, Not Victims

The current system already fails too many victims, and SB 819 makes it worse. We cannot allow sex offenders—especially those convicted of crimes against children or violent offenses—to manipulate the system and disappear from the record. Oregon should be working to strengthen protections for victims and communities, not making life easier for offenders.

Reject SB 819 – Stand with Victims, Not Offenders

If this bill passes, more families will go through what mine did. More survivors will feel like their voices don't matter. More dangerous individuals will be allowed to quietly fade from the system. That is not justice.

I urge you to stand up for victims and public safety by rejecting SB 819. Do not let Oregon become a place where offenders are prioritized over those they have harmed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cliff Richardson