

My name is Janet Nolley and I am writing in opposition to HB 3839.

I am writing in opposition because I do not think it will keep our children safer. Everyone wants children to be safe from sexual harm, but sometimes in our zeal to protect them, there are unintended consequences. I think that this bill falls into that category with consequences both for implementation and for harm to the children of registrants who are impacted - all without additional safety provided.

It is already true that school personnel can access information from the State Police on any individual wishing to volunteer in the school or any school-related (or for that matter any child-related) activities. When our children were in school any contact directly with children necessitated a background check, including possible sex offenses. To a lay person, this bill may envision something more - a list of all parents who are registrants provided to the school, a list that could be subject to informational spread and would be more than complicated to produce.

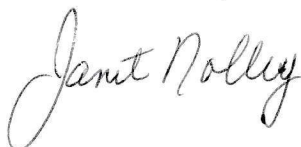
There are now roughly 27,500 people on the Registry, both male and female. The implementation of these lists would perhaps involve the State Police in collating this for all the schools in the state. Could that number of hours be justified when they can easily get information on any individual? I suggest that not only "may" there be a fiscal impact, but it may be a large one.

And without producing more safety as envisioned, could it also produce harm to other children? Part of the aim of the Level system was to allow low-risk registrants to have a stable life, something we know correlates with continued low recidivism. And part of that normal life is stability for their children. It is often forgotten that large numbers of registrants have wives and families.

I have had contact with literally hundreds of those families in the last 15 years and establishing that life has not been easy for them. Housing and employment are difficult at best and yet many do succeed. But I can't tell you how many suffered when a neighbor or their children's friend discovered the registrant status. Children are bullied, they are ostracized, they no longer receive invitations to classmates houses. They are punished for their parent's status. And any list is another way for a child to be "outed."

I often hear the phrase "if only one child is saved." Since studies tell us that recidivism for sex crimes is extremely low (in an Oregon study it was 1.8% after three years), I suspect that a comprehensive system of background checks by school personnel would give necessary protective information. And it has the advantage of not exposing other children to more risk of being excluded and shunned. We need to save all our children.

To reiterate, I oppose HB 3839 and I appreciate your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet Nolley". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed text of the letter.