

Oregon Voices News

News from Oregon that you can use

Oregon Voices is committed to justice and rationality in policies regarding sex offenses and will continue to work toward supporting legislation that will positively impact the lives of registered citizens and their families. We continue to support the efforts of other organizations that are also striving to make lives better for AICs and those reentering our communities.

Some of you have been wondering why we haven't held any OV General meetings since February. Attendance was beginning to wane, and we knew it had a lot to do with the completion of the Relief from the Registry Handbook, which is now available for use on the OV website. You no longer had to listen to us talk about it; instead, you could access it to read.

We understand that the Handbook's length can be daunting; however, if followed, one can be well prepared for an interview, and chances for achieving relief will be high if qualified. A visual roadmap was added to help guide those using the Handbook.

We now need to encourage and support those of you seeking relief from the registry. Therefore, instead of holding quarterly general meetings, a committee has been tasked with the responsibility of creating workshops to assist those who want to apply for relief. Once planned and scheduled, you will have the opportunity to attend one or more workshops later this year or early next year. More information is provided at the end of this newsletter.

This year we are honoring the 250th anniversary of our nation. Celebrations are being held in our respective communities. Although we have a lot to be thankful for, we also need to reflect on how past legislation has affected the lives of RCs and their families. As we write new chapters of our nation's history, we must continue our efforts to defeat new bills that cause harm to RCs. Hope is what keeps us going. Paint in your mind that beautiful sunset, the ocean waves, the fish you might have caught! Find activities that bring you enjoyment and peace.

Oregon Voices welcomes the creative work of Oregon's registered citizens and adults who are incarcerated. Please submit your artwork, photos, poetry, or a short story so that it can be included in future newsletters.



Rays of Hope and New Beginnings.

Submitted by D.T.

The Legislative Advisory Group Continues to Meet

The Legislative Advisory Group Study, formed by the Parole Board in the wake of the 2025 legislative session to consider changes to Oregon law regarding the registry, is back to meeting regularly. The two representatives from Oregon Voices continue to participate along with representatives from law enforcement, prosecutors, defense attorneys, county corrections, and the Oregon Youth Authority. As noted in previous newsletters, the process is being facilitated by Oregon Consensus, a state-funded agency that helps facilitate reasoned discussion on difficult subjects for the legislature. Their role is to try to help the group to find areas where there is substantial agreement with the goal of making a proposal or proposals for changes to sex offense notification levels.

At this point in time, participants are beginning to submit various proposals. While these are only being discussed, the group has also taken time to continue talking about the pros and cons of expanding the Oregon registry. Our Oregon Voices representatives continue to advocate against expanding notification levels and for the study group to consider research-based evidence when making final recommendations prior to the 2027 legislative session. More information about the work of this group will be available in the fall newsletter.

NARSOL Holds Conference in Baltimore

The conference this year was held in June in Baltimore, MD, with over 160 attendees from all over the country. The state representative from Alaska traveled the furthest to attend.

The Western region included Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, and Oklahoma, in addition to Oregon, which was represented this year.

The legal committee of NARSOL reviewed the eleven active lawsuits that have been filed against the Federal and state governments (notably those from West Virginia, Mississippi, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois), reviewing each case and its merits briefly. This was followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience.

On a lighter note, everyone seemed to have a gay time, with lots of mingling, reuniting with old friends, and enjoying meeting new people.

There were no issues with security, and attendees seemed to enjoy themselves, ready to go back to their states with new vim and vigor.

Legal Cases Related to Registrants

We, as OV board members, are going to report on legal cases that affect registrants in this and coming newsletters. That sounds like this information is a long way from your daily struggles, but historical and current case decisions have major impacts in complicated ways.

We need to go back to the Alaska Sex Offender Registration Act of 1994, believe it or not. States had registries before that, but the Alaska one added public notification, essentially online, and made it retroactive. Lawsuits on that retroactivity made it to the US Supreme Court, where it was upheld in 2003 in *Smith vs. John Doe*. Outmoded and inaccurate recidivism was part of the argument, of course. And one sentence has allowed what has become a registry that has metastasized like a cancer - that the act was civil and not punitive but presumably only regulatory. Registries spread in various forms and in 2006 resulted in the Adam Walsh Child Protection Act. Title 1 established SORNA (The Sex Offender Notification Act) as an attempt at a uniform national system without gaps or loopholes. So, that's an introduction. Find out in the next newsletter what happened with SORNA's attempt at uniformity and why Oregon has not fit its expectations. And why are court cases so important?

California Assembly Bills Stopped That Would Have Hurt Registrants

Oregon Voices need to keep abreast of legislative activities taking place in neighboring states. Janice, in her journal entries for the Alliance for Constitutional Sex Offense Laws (ACSOL), recently wrote about how California folks fought against a bill during the last legislative session that would have barred California registrants from petitioning for removal from the registry. This bill, AB1568, passed the California Assembly and was headed for the California Senate. Right at the last minute, the author withdrew it from future consideration. Janice credits the registrant community for “showing up, standing up, and speaking up.” The reason this bill was withdrawn is unknown; however, Janice attributes it to legislators perhaps not finding enough reasons to support it. Also, they may have learned more about the negative consequences that this bill would have placed on registrants.

There was another Assembly Bill (AB 2753) that would have prohibited anyone convicted of a sex offense from running for or serving in public office. It was also stopped.

These successes don't mean that these bills won't resurface during another legislative session, but in the meantime, it is refreshing to know that it makes a difference when people stand up, tell their stories, and make their voices heard. If you want to learn more about the activities of ACSOL and to read Janice's Journal entries in full, visit its website: <https://all4consolaws.org>

Polk County Provides Some Housing for RCs

A [report](#) from the Polk County Sheriff's Office states that Polk County Community Corrections offers 30-day transitional houses in three locations. Their department office has three beds for men, mainly sex offenders. Another location has two rooms with single beds at a local motel that can house male or female offenders, and the third is a program called River of Life, which has three beds for men who are not sex offenders. It is noted that this program is funded through the Justice Reinvestment and Reinvestment Grant Program.

The report says that this funding helped increase the number of transitional housing beds from 3 to 8. It is important that even though much more housing is needed, it is a step forward. Counties such as Polk are aware that reentry folks, especially RCs, have a difficult time finding a place to live within proximity to public transportation. These two factors alone are important upon reentry.

Employers Who Are Sympathetic to Hiring Those Re-entering Society

There is a website dedicated to establishing a list of companies that are sympathetic to hiring people who are reentering society after prison. While Oregon Voices does not know if all of these companies are sympathetic to registered citizens or not, we do think that you might have better luck finding employment with one of them. OV is always on the lookout for avenues that might lead to finding employment. It's a good site because the companies are listed alphabetically, and once you click on their respective links, you go directly to their websites. Remember that even though these companies are known for hiring people reentering their communities, it does not guarantee that you'll be able to land a job because it will depend on availability. If you click on the individual websites, you can discover whether they're hiring; then, do your research and follow the application process. For more information, visit the [website](#).

OACRA, a National Directory for Probation and Reentry Services

As always, OV looks for housing opportunities and support services for RCs. A source that we haven't discussed before is OACRA, a national directory for probation and reentry services. As stated on its website, it is a private, independent platform that helps people, providers, employers, and agencies find probation and reentry services across the United States. One of its goals is to provide information that can be accessed easily by individuals reentering their respective communities. It is a comprehensive directory to support reentry stability needs. Providers can apply to be added to the directory, so it is quite fluid. You can easily find information about services offered within each state as well as in Washington, D.C. Search categories for each state include Housing, Community Service, Employment, Treatment, and Financial Help.

This directory is off to a good start, but remember, there is no guarantee that every resource is available to registered citizens. However, there is no harm in checking. Upon reentry, registered citizens must work closely with their probation officers, who can, most likely, provide extra information about the services listed. Remember, it is never a good idea to enter any personal information on any form online. Call directly those resources that appear to be something you could use. Also, remember that OACRA is a private, independent resource-navigation platform. Be sure to read its terms of service and its disclaimer.

OACRA's website: <https://www.oacra.com/>

To go directly to Oregon's listings: <https://www.oacra.com/resources/oregon-probation>

Women Against Registry (WAR), a Non-Profit Working Softly To Advocate for the Abolishment of the Registry

It is a goal of Oregon Voices to introduce RCs to other organizations in Oregon that advocate for the abolishment of registries. This time, we would like to introduce you to Women Against the Registry. WAR states that its vision is to abolish the multiple Registries across our nation. WAR also seeks to restore Life, Health, and Freedom to all individuals who have been injured by the requirements of registration, especially innocent family members. They foresee a day when the suffocating stigma surrounding registration will be removed in favor of proper sentencing coupled with appropriate treatment; a day when the indefinite detention of civil commitment is replaced with compassionate programs designed to heal and restore. They hope for a day when virtually all who have offended against the laws of the land will be given the opportunity to rebuild a decent, honest life with the prospect of rehabilitation, reintegration, and redemption.

At present, WAR considers itself an advocate for more than 900,000 citizens required to register and perhaps more than 2.5 million family members. This organization feels that there is simply no value in a registry system and seeks fair treatment and a second chance for those deemed (by an unbiased risk-assessment process) to be of little or no threat to society. There is incontrovertible scientific evidence showing extremely low recidivism rates for those people who have committed a sex offense. As such, an exorbitant number of individuals are unnecessarily suffering the stigma of registration. It is the mission of Women Against Registry to change that reality. Please visit their [website](#) to learn more.

Tablet Devices for Oregon's AICs

As reported in the last OV newsletter, the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) will begin providing AICs with their own state-issued tablet. Distribution will occur gradually across different facilities and is expected to be rolled out starting in September 2026.

The DOC website, engage.doc.oregon.gov/tablet-deployment, explains why the DOC is moving toward the use of tablets. These include wanting AICs to have better access to tools that support communication, learning, and personal growth. The DOC also believes that tablets will help AICs stay connected with family, complete programs, and get information in a safe, reliable, and timely way. The long-term plan includes expanding the tablet-based programs and supporting secure communication with family and friends. The plan is that AICs will eventually be able to have entertainment options, such as movies or games, although fees will most likely apply.

The DOC is committed to making this transition as smooth as possible and ensuring that tablets support AIC success. Once the program is fully in place, officials will scan inmates' mail and send it to them via their tablet. One of the primary motivations for doing this was to cut down on [drugs](#) getting smuggled into prisons through the mail.

Oregon Voices has not been very successful in its attempt to provide information about our organization to AICs before they are scheduled to reenter their communities. Perhaps we will find it easier to do so once tablets are put to use.

OV Reminds RCs to Stay Compliant

An August 5 news report on KEZI 9 stated that the Oregon State Police led a sex offender compliance sweep across Eugene and some neighboring areas on July 31. The purpose was to verify that RCs complied with Oregon's sex offender registration laws. This sweep was called Oregon Nights 4 and involved members of the Oregon State Police Springfield Office, U.S. Marshals Service, Eugene Police Department, Lane County Parole and Probation, the Oregon State Police Sex Offender Registration Section, and the Coburg Police Department.

According to the report, officers contacted 56 offenders at their reported homes to check if they were living where they were registered to be living. Six were arrested and taken to the Lane County Jail. Fourteen were cited and released, and four warrants were served.

They also searched for offenders believed to be out of compliance, meaning that they failed to meet one or more reporting requirements. KEZI 9 reported that in 207 compliance checks were completed, and that 127 of those had failed to report a change of residence, meaning some may face new charges.

OV reminds RCs to be aware that these sweeps will occur, if they haven't already, in other areas of Oregon. We urge you to pay attention to the rules and to not take them lightly. Remember, too, that each state has its own set of rules, so be familiar with those as well if you plan to visit or move.

Check out the OV Website!

The OV President has taken on the responsibility of updating the OV website, and while much has been done, construction is not completed. Remember, however, that you can still find answers to most of your questions by visiting: <https://www.oregonvoices.org/>

We encourage RCs, their families, and loved ones to join the Oregon Voices email list if you haven't done so already because OV sends out helpful information for people required to register as well as to their supporters. We also send out notices about upcoming meetings and opportunities to advocate. We respect your privacy and want to ensure that our mailing list is safe for people impacted by the registry.

Remember to Register to Vote!

Pay attention to the platforms of people running for local, state, and national offices. And, when possible, attend their campaign rallies. We all need to exercise our rights and work toward electing people who support our causes.

If you are not sure about your eligibility to vote, remember that in Oregon, a person convicted of any crime and serving a term of imprisonment in any federal correctional institution in this state is deprived of the rights to register to vote, update a registration, or vote in any election in this state from the date of sentencing until the person's conviction is set aside, or the person is discharged or paroled from imprisonment. So, if you are now eligible, please register if you haven't done so already and then exercise your right to vote!

Watch for Upcoming OV Workshops

OV committee members are meeting to plan workshops on how to best utilize the Relief from the Registry Handbook when preparing to seek relief from the registry, as it is a daunting process. Other goals are to help people figure out if they qualify, to encourage folks to go through the process, to identify the barriers, and to educate the general public about Oregon Voices and that it is okay for RCs to be removed from the registry. We need to look for more allies. Mainly, society doesn't become safer by keeping folks on a sex offender registry.

OV will start offering these workshops possibly as soon as this fall. Watch your email or the website for future information.

Last, But Not Least

Help is always needed to work on such issues as housing, employment, education, legal resources, the website, legislation, and the OV newsletter. If you would like more information about Oregon Voices or wish to volunteer in some capacity, please call 971-317-6868 or email: info@oregonvoices.org

Please note that OV is very careful to guard the privacy of those who join the listserv and actively participate. We look to you to provide the board with new information and support, as we work together for the betterment of the lives of registered citizens and their loved ones. Also, be aware that the OV mailing address has changed.

OREGON VOICES

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