



PA Assoc. for Rational Sexual Offense Laws
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Thoughts From the Chair

PARSOL's Chairperson Theresa shares her thoughts

The editors of the *PARSOL QUARTERLY* asked if I would write a brief column for each newsletter about what might be on my mind. They weren't particularly specific, even saying I could "go on a rant" if I'd like. I may take them up on that in the future, but my focus for this issue is to express a deeply sincere gratitude for the past and present volunteers who have gotten PARSOL to where it is today.

PARSOL exists because over the past 5 years there have been people willing to roll up their sleeves and do hard work, which at times can be overwhelming and discouraging. 5 years ago Pennsylvania was a wasteland in terms of advocacy to change irrational sex offense laws and enhance evidence-based legislation that seeks to prevent sexual abuse. With literally no resources, a handful of enthusiastic, committed, caring, and talented volunteers had a vision of creating, as PARSOL's tagline says, "A Pennsylvania, safe and just for all." During our first year we were advised that most volunteer non-profits don't make it more than a year or two before they disband. Five years later, PARSOL is not only still in existence, but continues to grow solely because of the volunteers who put their hearts into this work.

Despite having the standard life stressors of jobs and family obligations, many of PARSOL's volunteers also manage the demands and stressors of probation or parole, mandated classes, polygraphs, exclusionary practices from landlords, employers, churches, etc. Nonetheless, they contribute in meaningful ways to move toward PARSOL'S vision. Volunteer contributions include building relationships and working with legislators and justice reform groups; tracking and analyzing State appellate cases (and distilling the legal jargon down to understandable terms for folks like me who need the cheat sheet to understand it); developing and maintaining social media; writing and distributing press releases; presenting at conferences, workshops, and committee meetings; coordinating volunteers and fundraising; and facilitating support groups for those on the registry and their families... to name SOME of what they do!

So, what's on my mind? Nothing short of immense appreciation and admiration for past and present volunteers who have and are cultivating what was a wasteland into an eco-system where the prevention of sexual abuse, justice, and dignity for all humans can thrive.



Legal Happenings

Finally getting somewhere in *Com. v. Torsilieri*, SVP Assessment and Determination

Progress is being made in the **Torsilieri** case. Both parties filed their legal briefs and reply briefs. We're now FINALLY at the point where the





FAQ Corner

Q: Can I go to the library, park, and other recreational places?

A: There are no state laws that forbid people on the registry from going to recreational areas. However, probation and parole can add such restrictions.

You can find more answers to your questions on our FAQs page.

evidentiary hearing gets scheduled. However, don't be surprised if someone asks for a continuance.

On Feb. 23, the Superior Court ruled in **Com. v. John Aumick**, 2022 PA Super. 33 that SVP determinations cannot solely be

made on testimony and reports from an SOAB assessor based on unproven allegations and hearsay. "The use of hearsay alone to support a determination was recently addressed by our Supreme Court in *Commonwealth v. McClelland*, 233 A.3d 717 (Pa. 2020). In that case, the court approved of the holding in *Commonwealth ex rel. Buchanan v. Verbonitz*, 525 Pa. 413, 581 A.2d 172 (1990), that hearsay evidence alone is insufficient to make out a prima facie case at a preliminary hearing [...] If hearsay alone is insufficient to make out a prima facie case at a preliminary hearing, then the use of unproven allegations alone to designate a person as an SVP is also improper. Where a defendant has no prior or subsequent opportunity to disprove the hearsay allegations, they cannot amount to clear and convincing evidence upon which an SVP determination must be made," *Aumick*, pages 8, 9-10. I do caution that this opinion could be overturned by the PA Supreme Court.

Our Legal Committee has created a handy resource that collects PA Supreme Court Cases concerning sexual offense challenges. This spreadsheet can be found on our website at <https://parsol.org/legal-cases/>.

While PARSOL **does not give legal advice**, you can send an email to josiah@parsol.org with questions about these and other cases working their way through the courts.

Legislation Information

PARSOL Federal SORNA Input, Sex Trafficking Legislation, Megan's Law for Nursing Homes, Legislative Volunteers Needed

Since the New Year, PARSOL's Legislative outreach has included meetings with policy-makers for the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. At these two meetings, the new Federal SORNA guidelines were discussed and how the changes might affect those PA residents who are forced to register. While neither official had heard from the federal government about implementation or enforcement, they said that they likely would in the coming months. Our input and perspective were valuable.

Separately, the Legislative Committee submitted remarks to the Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee on a proposed sex trafficking legislation. While human trafficking and sexual slavery are heinous crimes, PARSOL does not support any currently proposed laws that expand the registry.

Finally, comments voicing concerns on a proposed "Megan's Law for Nursing Homes" were submitted by one of our volunteers to the Chair of the House Health Committee.

We need more volunteers to assist us in our Legislative outreach and education. Please fill out the Volunteer Interest form on our website or send a message to randall@parsol.org to find out how you can get involved. For more info on legislation, feel free to send an email to randall@parsol.org. We also have legislative resources on our website www.parsol.org/





Volunteer and Organization Outreach

Volunteers help make it happen

We continue to be more aggressive in our outreach efforts as we have much planned for 2022. Several people have answered the call with our community support, legal research, letter writing, and outreach to prisoners. But we still have positions to fill. Please reach out to us today if you are interested in lending your talents to any of the following positions:

- Grant writer
- Board member
- Committee members
- Legislative outreach team members

In our efforts to network with attorneys, volunteers have been mailing out letters. We are currently in talks with one attorney on his role with us, but are still actively seeking out a partner.

If you or someone you know would like to support PARSOL or get involved, please see our Volunteer page at <https://secure.parsol.org/volunteer/>. You can also give us a call at 717-820-2237 or send us a letter at P.O. Box 399, New Freedom, PA 17349.

Highlighting Community Resources

Help is available

Finding housing, employment, and other living essentials are more difficult to find if you're a registered citizen, but not all hope is lost. There are resources out there who are willing to help if you are willing to put in the effort of making phone calls, keeping appointments, and filling out the paperwork it takes to make things happen. In this issue we highlight CareerLink.

CareerLink is a great place where you can search and apply for job openings across the Commonwealth

or narrow it down to their own town. They can help you create a professional looking resume, prepare you for job interviews, and supply you with employment leads. They also offer employment skill training whether you're just entering the workforce, wanting to brush up your skills, or looking to change careers.

CareerLink has offices all throughout PA. Launching your career is just one click away at <https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/>.

Fearless Group

Monthly support group for those affected by the registry



Join us on the second Saturday of every month from 4 – 5:30PM as PARSOL hosts

a free video / telephone meeting open to all residents of PA who are affected by the public registry. This includes registrants themselves, their family members, and their friends. We aim to create a safe environment free from the influence of law enforcement or treatment providers.

To take part in this one-of-a-kind meeting of people “who get it”, you can either send an email to ashley@parsol.org or call 717 820 2237 .

Tell a friend, or come to the meeting and make one!

Re-entry Success Story: James S.

I didn't realize how severe the consequences were on getting out of prison and finding a place to live. My date came for my parole, it was very hard to wrap my head around knowing that I have this horrendous crime under my belt. I sent letter after letter to various places to see who would accept me and my record.





After no response, I was losing hope for my release date knowing that I had nowhere to go. By luck, I had one person that I relied on, my twin sister. She went to town to research places for me to live. She came onto one person that would give me that chance. After getting the home plan sent out to the landlord, I was nervous that he would not sign it or forget about returning the paperwork to me.

A few weeks went by, I got my home plan back; DENIED. There was no reasoning on how they made their decision. I had my sister reach out to the landlord. He indicated the parole agent spoke to one of the tenants. I had to resubmit the home plan and indicate that when the parole agent went out the agent didn't speak to the homeowner, it was a tenant. I didn't give up, I kept going after it hoping to get back out to the semi free world.

I waited for another couple of weeks and finally got the news I was waiting for; APPROVED. I was excited, yet nervous, because I didn't know what the outside world had in store for me. I got instructions from the prison once I left. I had 24 hours to report to PSP to register again. I'm like, "great here we go on this unknown journey." Once I registered with PSP, I had to go and check in with my parole officer. He gave me rules to follow and do while I finished my parole.

I had to get my classes setup for offender counseling. I had no money to pay for rent, no money for food, no vehicle, nothing period. I was really stressing out on something that was in my face staring right at me. I was instantly searching for jobs and had no luck. I made over 1,000 phone calls and placed many applications. In the meantime, I went to the Public Assistance Office for food stamps. While my rent was backing up and getting more stressed, I searched in newspaper after newspaper for jobs. Then I found a driving job for the Amish. I got a vehicle from my brother that I could use to get around and get back on my feet. In the meantime, I continued placing applications, and calling various places for

employment and no one wanted to work with my record. With this set back it gave me more motivation to continue getting a job to pay my rent on a weekly basis. I was so thankful that I had a person that was understandable of what I was going through in life. This is the key for reentry into society.

After three weeks of looking for something permanent, I had luck with an old employer who gave me a second chance. After I received my first pay, I got my rent caught up, I focused on parole and group expenses, then child support. This was no walk in the ballpark, especially living in a rooming house with other people and the owner. Coming from prison to reentry is very stressful and overwhelming because you have multiple things going on at once. The best result is to mark things down on paper and make a checklist to do for your first week home.

I walked off my parole, completed counseling, and moved forward with my life. In the meantime, Megan's Law was changing rapidly and forcing people to register under SORNA. I was sentenced to 10 years under the old law. However, I complied and did what I had to do to keep myself compliant and under the radar. I got a lawyer involved and spent over \$15,000 to get my registration back to the original sentence.

Eventually, I met a special person that became my current wife, and we are doing well. When we started to date it was very hard for me to explain my past to her, but I had to because I was in counseling. I told her my background and exactly what problems I had, and she accepted me for me and not looking at what I did. As we were dating and getting involved more, I asked her if she and her kids wanted to move in with me. She agreed that we find a place of our own because I was living with a roommate. It was that time of year checks with the local police. The detective came around and I asked him if my wife and kids could move in with me. He said absolutely not because I was on tier two of SORNA. That put a big damper on my relationship and myself because I couldn't get any further in our relationship. I said, "this





got to change". I got a good attorney involved and fought my registration reporting.

Once I got back to my 10-year registration, I was able to live with my wife and her kids. I worked on my credit and got into shape; continued to work hard to save up to buy a house. My focus was to have my own house. After three years, I had enough money saved up to get a down payment on my house. My wife and I and her kids moved in and we started our life together. Before I moved, I had some tragedies that I had to deal with. I was in a motorcycle accident, lost my mother, and then was in a serious car accident. These three things all happened within a year before my wife and I moved to our new house.

We got our new house; it was pretty much a calm area. Nobody bothered us nor came to visit me from the local police. They floated around, but not one stopped into my residence for the period that we lived there. During my time through all this, I worked full time and did side hustling with buying and selling stuff. My wife and I lived here for about a year or two and decided to move to a bigger house. When Covid-19 came along, I got it and was in the hospital for three days, managed that, then got the COVID shots. After three months, I came down with a major heart attack. I'm still working full time; my wife is working 24/7 and we are doing well. Yes, granted you have those people that want to tear you down and make trouble with you, but you can't let that get to you. As of 2022, I am looking to open my own business as a Mobile Mechanic and do me as a person. The challenges that are affecting me right now is that I can't or won't travel until I'm released from Megan's Law which on June 10th of 2022 is my last time to register. Overall, being a registrant isn't difficult to overcome to better things in life.

You can have your story published by submitting it at <https://parsol.org/contact-us/>.

Virtual Open House with a Board of Director



Join PARSOL Board Members the first Sunday of every month from 4-5 PM for a virtual Open House. Here, you can ask questions, find out more about our Committees, or give us feedback and suggestions on the work we've been doing. At least one Board Member will be available during Open House

If you'd like to attend, just register anytime up to or during this event to immediately receive the Zoom Login info. People without Zoom may also call in after registering.

Register at

<https://secure.parsol.org/virtual-open-house/>.

Things to Remember

- PARSOL is a 501c3 organization. This will make donations easier for those who wish to have a tax write-off.
 - Please consider securely donating either at <https://secure.parsol.org/donate/> or at our physical mailing address, found below.
- We've included the NARSOL [PA State Wiki](#) page under our Resource tab. Look for PA Laws Regarding Registration.
- Check out our [News page](#) for updates in Pennsylvania.





****If you know someone who is currently incarcerated, please send them a copy of this newsletter.****

If you are incarcerated and there is content that you would like to see in these newsletters or online, please reach out and let us know. You are not forgotten.

Be sure to follow PARSOL on social media and help us spread the word. You can find us at PARSOL on Facebook, @PARSOL7 on Twitter, and PA Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws on YouTube

Please consider becoming a member. Any amount, large or small, will allow us to broaden our efforts, contact more people, and bring awareness to these issues that affect you, your family, and your community. Donations are accepted at www.secure.parsol.org/donate and by mail.

Thank you for your support,

The PARSOL Board of Directors

PARSOL is a proud affiliate of the National Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws (NARSOL).



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