

HB – 2739 – Opponent Testimony of Jason D. Runyan  
February 28, 2018

Chairman Jennings and honorable members of the House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee I am writing in opposition of HB - 2739 the legislation removing the protection for specific minors from registering as sex offender on the Kansas sex offenders registry.

I am the father of a boy who has to register. His crime was against my stepson. It was one of the most life changing events in my life to know that someone I love could hurt someone else I love in such a devastating way. I understand the utility of him registering in the years following his actions. It has provided him with some humility and a reminder every month of what happened, and his part in it. He is a changed person over the last few years, and that is in no way due to his having to register. Him losing the protections of the private registry or having to register for the rest of his life would have had a major negative impact on his desire to improve the man he was growing into. It would have left him exposed to the uninformed hatred and fear of the community of a boy who committed a crime when he was 12 years old. It would not benefit society in any way, and very well could have helped raise up another violent offender as he became an adult who was prevented from rejoining society in a meaningful way. To spend a lifetime paying for a crime committed as a child is the surest way to take away someone's hope. It is to prolong punishment for an eternity. In so many ways this seems both cruel and unusual to me. If we are to be a civilized society, then we must at times take the risk to allow people to behave civilly who have in the past not.

“Beware how you take away hope from another human being” - Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.