Dear Sheriff ,

With the abundant research showing low sexual recidivism rates comes the question: What changes need to be made to the lifetime registry in Florida?

Laws should not be passed merely because they serve to increase the public’s false feelings of safety or boost the ratings of get-tough-on-crime politicians. Criminal justice reform needs to involve registry reform.

Many times, victims of domestic abuse have suffered more than someone has from a sexual offense, yet the domestic abuse perpetrator can live anywhere he/she chooses after release from prison. The same is true for released murderers, armed robbers, drug dealers, etc.

How would residency restrictions have prevented Donald Smith from doing what he did to Cherish Periwinkle?

How does Community Notification of personal information, registration, compliance checks, etc. keep children safer from people who have served out their sentence for a sex offense, learned their lesson, and never sexually re-offend?

As is true for anyone released from prison, people with a past sex offense need a job, place to live, and family/community support to in order to reintegrate back into society successfully. All evidence is showing that the registry is causing more harm than good for the thousands of registrants in Florida who are not sexually re-offending. The registry as it is today and its many draconian laws hurt a person’s chances of successful reintegration.

People on the Sex Offense Registry who are not sexually re-offending and are low risk need to be removed from the registry. Waiting 25 years beyond the last day of supervision/probation to apply for removal from the registry is draconian and doing little to prevent future sex crimes.

I would like to emphasize one last time that the truly dangerous sexual re-offenders need to be monitored, but how does monitoring people with a past sex offense, who will never sexually re-offend, help society? That money and manpower would be better used for prevention and more victims’ services.

I have enclosed research-based proposals on how the registry should be reformed, if not abolished, as we know it today.

Sincerely,