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August 28, 2017

Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County
Stephen P. Clark Government Center
111 NW 1st Street, Suite 220
Miami, Florida 33128

Attn: Commissioner District 1, Barbara J. Jordan	Sent via Email: District1@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 2, Jean Monestime	Sent via Email: District2@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 3, Audrey M. Edmonson	Sent via Email: District3@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 4, Sally A. Heyman	Sent via Email: District4@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 5, Bruno A. Barreiro	Sent via Email: District5@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 6, Rebeca Sosa	Sent via Email: District6@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 7, Xavier L. Suarez	Sent via Email: District7@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 8, Daniella Levine Cava	Sent via Email: District8@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 9, Dennis C. Moss	Sent via Email: DennisMoss@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 10, Javier D. Souto	Sent via Email: District10@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 11, Joe A. Martinez	Sent via Email: District11@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 12, Jose "Pepe" Diaz	Sent via Email: District12@MiamiDade.gov
Commissioner District 13, Esteban L. Bovo, Jr.	Sent via Email: District13@MiamiDade.gov

RE: TRANSIENT SEX OFFENDERS

Dear Commissioners:

The Florida Action Committee (FAC) is a not-for-profit public safety advocacy organization. We write concerning the homeless encampment on NW 71st Street and 36th Court in Miami. Our concern is both for the individuals who were legislated into homelessness and forced to live there, as well as the community in those areas in which they are clustered.

As you have undoubtedly heard in recent news^{[1][2][3][4]}, an encampment of over 250 registered individuals are living outdoors, along active railroad tracks and without water or sanitation. Ron Book, of the Miami-Dade Homeless Trust has apparently been charged with solving this problem.

Although Mr. Book denied knowledge of the inhumane conditions there until just over a week ago, that seems unlikely, considering it is the subject of a Federal Lawsuit brought against the County in 2014, and was featured in the documentary film “Untouchable”, which also featured Mr. Book.

Regardless, the current situation is a rehash of the eviction of registrants from the River Park Trailer Park (by the Homeless Trust) in 2013^[5], their eviction from Shorecrest (by the installation of the “Little River Pocket Park”) in 2012^[6] and the infamous eviction of sex offenders from under the Julia Tuttle Causeway in 2010.^[7] Each time, the same scenario; with the same result; with the same individual steering the ship.

It’s time to put a decade of health, public safety and human rights tragedies to rest. As commissioners, you have a responsibility to act in the best interest of this County and before spending more money and resources on a plan that has failed repeatedly, you should investigate whether the current policy is working.

¹ <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article168569977.html>

² <https://www.local10.com/news/local-10-investigates/homeless-registered-sex-offenders-set-up-camp-near-hialeah>

³ <http://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/miami-dade-laws-force-sex-offenders-into-homelessness-and-squalor-9559894>

⁴ <http://wlrn.org/post/sex-offenders-sent-homeless-encampment-told-find-housing-where>

⁵ <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article1953953.html>

⁶ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/16/marc-sarnoff-creates-pocket-park-sex-offenders_n_1428637.html

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julia_Tuttle_Causeway_sex_offender_colony

While a law that excludes registered sex offenders from living within 2500 feet of a school between 10PM and 6AM may seem logical (at least for school children who take night classes), study after study has proven Sex Offender Residency Restrictions (SORRs) are ineffective, counter-productive and work against efforts to rehabilitate offenders.^{[8] [9]}

The premise for SORRs are based on myths,^[10] such as high recidivism rates (when in fact, recidivism is amongst the lowest of any offender class), stranger danger (in fact, more than 9/10 victims know their offenders) and the belief that there is a correlation between offending and proximity to schools (there is none). Even law enforcement and probation oppose SORRs^[11] because it makes their job more difficult.

SORRs cause homelessness and an increased likelihood of violating registration^[12] and absconding.^[13] The negative impacts of SORRs are felt not only by the registrant but their families, including their own children^[14] and the communities into which they are clustered.

With over a decade of empirical research under our belts, it is time to balance the salutary effects (if any) of this ordinance against the obvious deleterious effects and question whether SORRs are wasting valuable and scarce resources that could otherwise be spent on prevention^[15] or other County budgetary needs.

We strongly encourage you to repeal the ordinance.

Sincerely,

s/

Gail Colletta, President

The Florida Action Committee, Inc.

⁸ Levenson, Jill S., and Claudia P. Vicencio. "Residence Restrictions." *Sexual Violence*. Springer International Publishing, (2016). 51-65.

⁹ Radford, Lorraine, et al. "Rapid Evidence Assessment: What can be learnt from other jurisdictions about preventing and responding to child sexual abuse." (2017).

¹⁰ Shattuck, Taurean J. "Pushing the Limits: Reining in Ohio's Residency Restriction for Sex Offenders." *Clev. St. L. Rev.* 65 (2016): 591.

¹¹ Aparcero-Suero, Maria. *Law Enforcement Officers' Perceptions in Regard to Sex Offenders, SORN, and Residency Restrictions Laws*. Diss. East Tennessee State University, (2017).

¹² Levenson, Jill, et al. "Where for art thou? Transient sex offenders and residence restrictions." *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 26.4 (2015): 319-344.

¹³ Socia, Kelly M., et al. "'Brothers Under the Bridge' Factors Influencing the Transience of Registered Sex Offenders in Florida." *Sexual Abuse* 27.6 (2015): 559-586.

¹⁴ Kilmer, Ashley, and Chrysanthi S. Leon. "'Nobody worries about our children': unseen impacts of sex offender registration on families with school-age children and implications for desistance." *Criminal Justice Studies* 30.2 (2017): 181-201.

¹⁵ Perillo, Anthony D. "The Economics of Sex Offender Policy and Prevention." *Sexual Violence*. Springer International Publishing, (2016). 305-324.