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October 7, 2022

City of Gainesville, Florida
Gainesville City Commissioners
200 East University Ave.
Gainesville, FL 32601

SENT VIA EMAIL AND VIA
CERTIFIED US MAIL
citycomm@cityofgainesville.org

RE: SEX OFFENDER RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS

Dear Lawmakers:

I am President of the Florida Action Committee (FAC), a 2500+ member non-profit organization that advocates for public safety and laws based on empirical research. Our focus is on the Florida Sex Offender Registry.

It recently was brought to our attention that the City is considering amending its Sex Offender Residency Restriction (SORR) to conform with the State's SORR. We strongly support this measure.

In Florida, registration is for life. Each year thousands of individuals are added without any attrition. There are currently more than 80,000 people on the list. As more individuals are added to the registry and the already limited availability of compliant housing is diminished, research suggests public safety will be compromised, rather than protected.

SORRs drastically reduce the availability of compliant housing options.¹ As the number of registrants grows, and the availability of already limited housing is consumed or eliminated, the number of transient (homeless) registrants will increase.

¹ 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.

While we understand the popularity of SORRs and realize you may get pushback on this issue, as lawmakers' your primary concern should be public safety, not popularity. Research suggests there is no evidence that SORRs reduce sexual offending or recidivism.² This fact has been demonstrated across numerous studies, including the U.S. Department of Justice, which concluded that SORRs should not be viewed as a viable strategy for protecting communities.³

To the contrary, SORRs create barriers to reentry by fostering housing instability, separation from family, support systems, and isolation, all of which are factors that *increase* recidivism. Transient registrants are more likely than those with homes to abscond from registration.⁴ SORRs prevent sick or elderly registrants from living with family or entering assisted living facilities. An international, interdisciplinary non-profit organization for the advancement of professional standards and practices in the field of sex offender evaluation and treatment suggests that SORRs may cause *higher* levels of recidivism.⁵

SORRs also create a fiscal burden for taxpayers, associated with mapping, monitoring, enforcement, court costs, and incarceration costs. As Mayor Poe mentioned, SORRs also raise serious constitutional issues.

While we appreciate this topic can be incendiary, the facts demonstrate that SORRs do nothing to make the public safer. To the contrary, SORRs place a greater burden on citizens and law enforcement and make our communities *less* safe. Accordingly, we urge you to amend your SORR to conform to the State's SORR and alleviate this public safety issue.

Respectfully Submitted,
/s/ Gail Colletta
Gail Colletta, President

² Nobles, Matt R., Jill S. Levenson, and Tasha J. Youstin. "Effectiveness of residence restrictions in preventing sex offense recidivism." *Crime & Delinquency* 58.4 (2012): 491-513

³ http://smart.gov/SOMAPI/sec2/ch6_registration.html

⁴ Levenson, J. S., Ackerman, A. R., Socia, K. M., & Harris, A. J. (2015). Where for Art Thou? Transient Sex Offenders and Residence Restrictions. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 26(4), 319-344.
doi:10.1177/0887403413512326

⁵ https://www.atsa.com/pdfs/Policy/2014-02-18_ATSA_CCASA_Amicus_Brief.pdf