

October 14, 2015

HAND-DELIVERED

The Hon. Peter Kilmartin
Attorney General
150 South Main Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Attorney General Kilmartin:

As you know, police departments across the state have begun enforcing a law enacted in July barring Tier III sex offenders from residing within 1,000 feet of a school. As you also know, our groups, and others, have raised strong concerns about the law from both a policy and legal standpoint.

Whatever one's views about the law, however, the way it is being enforced should be deeply troubling to all, including your office. This past week, for example, we learned that a resident of North Smithfield was advised by the police department that it had been determined he lived within 1,000 feet of a school and he had *one day* to move or else face arrest. Recently, Providence police advised offenders in that municipality that they had only 30 days to move, regardless of the circumstances. Even so, when one of those offenders met with his probation officer a week later, he was required to sign an "acknowledgement form" about the law that he had to move "immediately" in order to comply.

The completely arbitrary and extremely compressed timeframes that these police departments – and, we assume, others – are using to uproot individuals from their homes are unconscionable.

Requiring people to flee their homes in the face of felony charges will contribute to the likelihood of chaotic relocations and homelessness. The result of imposing these draconian compliance time requirements is to make it *more*, not less, difficult for police to keep track of offenders, and more difficult for those offenders to maintain jobs and treatment programs. In short, the way this law is now being implemented makes clear that it has nothing to do with public safety, but a lot to do with seeking to further punish individuals for offenses they committed in the past.

We therefore urge your office to establish a uniform enforcement date for this law, that it be, at a bare minimum, no less than 60 days from today, and that you communicate this date to local law enforcement agencies.

Please feel free to call either Sol Rodriguez at Open Doors (781-5808) or LeeAnn Byrne at the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless (721-5685) if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Sol Rodriguez, Executive Director
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