

Favorable with Amendment Response to HB854 Sex Offenders – Required Registration – Locations

Families Advocating Intelligent Registries (FAIR) seeks rational, constitutional sexual offense laws and policies for persons accused and convicted of sexual offenses. We originally supported this bill, but the amendment renders the bill wholly inadequate. There is a substantial issue in Maryland and around the country relating to homelessness caused by or exacerbated by being on a public registry¹, and only one or two locations for periodic registration are particularly inadequate to meet the needs of the homeless registrant population.

FAIR recently conducted a review of the Maryland registry, and the impact of homelessness on the ability of a registrant to maintain compliance with registry requirements (risking noncompliance, criminal prosecution, and incarceration) is evident.

Compliance rates for individuals on the Maryland Registry are overall very high. Compliance rate relates to conformance with the requirements of the Maryland Registry (e.g., periodic reporting of address, automobile registrations, attending new school/job, internet identifiers, etc). Failure to provide this information or not providing it timely is deemed “noncompliance” and can result in prosecution and imprisonment.

According to FAIR’s review:

- Tier 1 ~ 94% compliance rate (report in-person every 6 months)
- Tier 2 > 95% compliance rate (report in-person every 6 months)
- Tier 3 > 92% compliance rate (report in-person every 3 months)
- Homeless** individuals (also included within Tiers 1, 2, and 3)²
< 60% compliance rate (report in-person weekly)

For Maryland’s homeless registrants, threatened by prosecution and incarceration for failure to meet registry requirements, often unemployed with limited to no access to transportation, a single registration location is inadequate. Providing only two locations in our largest, most populous counties is equally inadequate.

HB854's original language attempted to fix the problems created by the state when mandating weekly registration for homeless registrants. **The bill should, at a minimum, call for the introduction of more locations within each county for our homeless registrant population; or in the alternative, provide transport or mobile registration (combined with existing law enforcement compliance checks).**

Sincerely,



Brenda V. Jones, Executive Director
Families Advocating Intelligent Registries

¹ For example, [Homelessness Among Persons on Delaware's Sex Offender Registry - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#), (June 2023)
and
[Association Between Registered Sex Offender Status and Risk of Housing Instability and Homelessness among Veterans - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#) (Sept 2022).

² Because homeless registrants are also within Tiers 1, 2 or 3, the factor of homelessness impacts the reported compliance rates for Tiers 1, 2 and 3 shown here.