



Families Advocating
Intelligent Registries

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HB 812
FWA

Favorable IF AMENDED Response to HB 812 Correctional Services – Diminution Credits – Education

Families Advocating Intelligent Registries (FAIR) has a special concern for persons accused and convicted of sexual offenses, and seeks rational, constitutional sexual offense laws and policies. We are deeply disturbed by the carve-out being made in HB 812 for all persons who would be required to register. There is no reason whatever to do so.

Diminution Credits for educational achievement are an excellent, proven incentive for incarcerated persons. Not only are they improving themselves and opening doors for themselves once they are released, working toward such goals provides a strong motivation for good behavior behind prison walls. HB 812 would provide a deduction in incarceration time for a range of educational and vocational certifications, diplomas and degrees. As anyone counting the hours until release can tell you, 90 days sooner as “reward” for completing such a program is a huge incentive.

But there is no justification to exclude persons who would be required to register. Such diminution credits benefit persons who will be on the registry (and society at large) as much as or perhaps more than any other convicted person.

Contrary to common misperceptions,

1. The majority of persons who are required to register have NOT sexually harmed a child, and a large number have non-contact offenses;
2. Most registered persons are one-time offenders, NOT repeat or multiple; and
3. Compared to the re-offense rate of persons with other convictions, persons on the registry are far less likely to sexually reoffend.

Realities

1. Persons with sexual offenses face severe challenges upon their release. They are barred from many housing opportunities, struggle to find even non-child-related employment, and are restricted from participating in their children's lives due to presence restrictions.
2. Studies demonstrate that successful reintegration and community support are key factors in reducing recidivism. An educational achievement would assist in successful reintegration.

3. Positive encouragement via diminution credits will benefit this population as much as, and probably more than, any other convicted group.
4. With society's barriers so much higher, every incentive for sexual offenders to succeed should be provided, including diminution credits for education.

To conclude, FAIR is highly supportive of offering diminution credit for completion of educational goals. FAIR only requests that these credits apply to all persons behind bars, with no exceptions. Please vote NO for HB812, or **amend it to match SB971**, which is identical except that it merely reduces good time to 60 days instead of 90 for persons convicted of violent offenses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda V. Jones". The signature is fluid and includes a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Brenda V. Jones, Executive Director
Families Advocating Intelligent Registries