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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 20-H 7197,
RELATING TO SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION
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This bill would limit the circumstances under which a juvenile convicted of a delinquency for a sex-related offense would be subject to the state's onerous and punitive registration and community notification requirements in place for sex offenders.

Any juvenile charged with a serious sex offense can currently be waived into adult court where their conviction of, or plea to, such an offense would automatically subject them to SORNA. Here, however, we are talking about young teens who have been adjudicated delinquent in Family Court—a court that is specifically designed to serve a rehabilitative, not punitive role – yet they are being subject to life-changing penalties that will affect them well into their adult lives into just every facet of their life – whether it is employment, housing or an education.

No other state in New England, to our knowledge, requires juveniles adjudicated delinquent for sex offenses to register under a SORNA-type law. Nor does the federal statute impose its requirements on such juveniles. As the National Juvenile Justice Network recently noted: “Sex offense registries and public notification needlessly damage the lives of youths and have no known public safety benefits.” Being just the opposite of rehabilitation, the current process should be rejected. The ACLU of RI therefore supports this bill.