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**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO 18-S 2586,
RELATING TO SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION**

March 27, 2018

As we have in past years, the ACLU of Rhode Island opposes this effort to incorporate various provisions of the federal Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) into state law. We briefly note a few of the reasons for our opposition below:

1. Although the federal act has been in effect for more than a decade, only 18 states in that time have adopted the law. Other states have recognized its onerous and adverse impact and that the money withheld from the federal government (less than \$100,000 in Rhode Island) for failing to enact it is much less than the costs to implement it.

2. By expanding and complicating the registration requirements, the new provisions become a trap for the unwary. People who have done their time can find themselves subject to serious criminal penalties for failing to comply with technical requirements of the registration statute. The burdens are especially hard on the homeless.

3. In that regard, the bill significantly expands the scope of the state's sex offender residency law, making it even more difficult for ex-offenders to find a stable place to live and, consequently, more difficult for them to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into society.

4. The community notification provisions are also widely expanded under the bill, and can also only have the effect of pushing these former offenders to fail. Among other new requirements, the person's employer would be listed on a publicly accessible website, as would the person's car license plate number. Requirements like these will subject the individual and his or her family to retribution and serve no helpful social purpose.

For these reasons and many others, the ACLU urges rejection of the bill.