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## **NCRSOL condemns state's prohibition on fair goers**

*Calls on Sheriff Baker not to enforce law banning sex offenders from NC State Fair*

Raleigh, North Carolina—Concerned over a rash of recent news reports throughout the state trumpeting local law enforcement's efforts to suppress county fair attendance by the state's 24,000 registered sex offenders (See [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)), North Carolina RSOL (NCRSOL) questions why vital public safety resources are being wasted tracking sex offenders while serious threats to the fair-attending public get short shrift (for example, the deadly outbreak of Legionnaires disease this week at the Mountain State Fair in Fletcher).

After suffering a significant legal setback to its first effort at regulating where sex offenders are permitted to go and be (*Does v. Cooper*, 2016), the North Carolina General Assembly revised and enacted a [new premises statute](#) in 2017 that goes even further by resurrecting portions of the previous statute declared unconstitutional and adding a statewide ban on sex offenders attending agricultural fairs.

In July 2018, NCRSOL joined a [lawsuit seeking](#) declaratory relief and a permanent injunction against the state's enforcement of N.C.G.S. § 14-208.18 (Sex Offender Unlawfully on Premises). Styled *NCRSOL v. Stein*, the case is presently before U.S. District Court Judge William L. Osteen, Middle District of North Carolina, where it recently [withstood, in most part](#), the state's Motion to Dismiss. The matter is set for trial on a schedule to be determined at a pre-trial conference set for October 23.

"This is an answer in search of a problem that has never existed before and does not exist now. This is a feel good law that serves two purposes: 1) to harass North Carolinians who have already completed their criminal sentences and 2) to provide elected sheriffs with an easy way to curry favor and win votes by wagging their fingers at a population of people that it's okay to hate," stated Robin W. Vander Wall, NCRSOL's founder and president.

"What we are witnessing is a coordinated effort by county sheriffs that is repugnant to citizens' liberty rights and an affront to the state's constitution. Rather than taking a stand for their citizens' freedom of movement and access, these rogue sheriffs are happy to send out press releases placing a scorned and marginalized group of citizens in further jeopardy of criminal prosecution. Meanwhile, all manner of present and ex-cons are walking freely about at these fairs with little concern and even less worry that their freedoms may be in jeopardy," continued Vander Wall.

"As a citizen of North Carolina who was born and raised right here in Wake County, I am personally calling on Sheriff Baker to reject the enforcement of this law when the N.C. State Fair opens on October 17. The state fair should be a place where all law-abiding citizens are welcome to bring their families and join their friends in a celebration of our state's rich and historic agricultural traditions," Vander Wall concluded.

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