

# Titus House Newsletter

Titus House Ministries, PO Box 2376, Tijeras, NM 87059

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## An anti-porn app put him in jail and his family under surveillance

Source [arstechnica.com 6/13/23](https://arstechnica.com/6/13/23)

Prosecutors in Monroe County this spring charged Hannah’s husband with possession of child sexual abuse material—a serious crime that she says he did not commit and to which he pleaded not guilty. Given the nature of the charges, the court ordered that he not have access to any electronic devices as a condition of his pretrial release from jail. To ensure he complied with those terms, the probation department installed Covenant Eyes on Hannah’s phone, as well as those of her two children and her mother-in-law.

In near real time, probation officers are being fed screenshots of everything Hannah’s family views on their devices. From images of YouTube videos watched by her 14-year-old daughter to online underwear purchases made by her 80-year-old mother-in-law, the family’s entire digital life is scrutinized by county authorities. “I’m afraid to even communicate with our lawyer,” Hannah says. “If I mention anything about our case, I’m worried they are going to see it and use it against us.”

Covenant Eyes is part of [a multimillion-dollar market](#) of “accountability” apps [sold to churches and parents](#) as a tool to police online activity. For a monthly fee, the app monitors every single thing a user does on their devices, then sends the data it collects, including screenshots, to an “ally” or “accountability partner,” who can review the user’s online activities.

For Hannah’s family, their Covenant Eyes “allies” are two probation officers in Monroe County’s Pretrial Services Program charged with scrutinizing their web activity and ensuring that Hannah’s husband does not violate the terms of his bond while using one of his family members’ devices.

Covenant Eyes doesn’t permit its software to be used in a “premeditated legal setting,” such as monitoring people on probation, according to its [terms of service](#). But public spending documents, court records, and interviews show that courts in at least five US states have used Covenant Eyes to surveil the devices of people who are awaiting trial or released on parole.

Neither Covenant Eyes nor multiple officials in Monroe County responded to repeated requests for comment and detailed questions about the app’s monitoring.

While the use of Covenant Eyes in a criminal-legal setting likely only represents a tiny fraction of the hundreds of thousands of people under court-ordered electronic surveillance, the stakes are still high for those required to use it. The app’s accuracy could determine whether a loved one lives at home or behind bars. Legal experts say that its use raises serious constitutional and due process concerns.

“This is the most extreme type of monitoring that I’ve seen,” says Pilar Weiss, founder of the National Bail Fund Network, a network of over 90 community bail and bond funds across the United States. “It’s part of a disturbing trend where deep surveillance and social control applications are used pretrial with little oversight.”



## FL: Weaponization of Florida's Legal System Being Used Against People on the Sex Offender Registry source Tampabay.com

Gov. Ron DeSantis vowed that if he wins the presidency he will “excise political bias and end weaponization” of the U.S. Department of Justice “once and for all.”

“We have for years witnessed an uneven application of the law depending upon political affiliation,” he wrote on Twitter on Thursday night in response to news that former President Donald Trump has been federally indicted on charges related to mishandling classified documents.

The tone was consistent with DeSantis’ portrayal of himself as fighting against liberal takeovers of powerful institutions. But as governor, DeSantis has been unafraid to use law enforcement, the courts or the expansion of his own executive powers to pursue his own agenda.

Here are three examples of DeSantis pushing the legal envelope to accomplish what he wants:

Prosecuting felons for voting:

Hours before DeSantis held an afternoon news conference surrounded by uniformed law enforcement officers, nearly 20 people with felony records were arrested across Florida as part of a planned operation by state police.

DeSantis warned others that if they, too, improperly cast a vote: “We’re coming.”

The arrests were a display of the powers of the newly formed Office of Election Crimes and Security, which DeSantis pushed for amid pressure from the GOP base to do more to investigate Trump’s baseless claims of widespread voter fraud.

The people arrested had voted in elections despite being convicted of disqualifying felonies, including **sex offenses** and murder. Many expressed confusion about the charges, saying they had been issued voter ID cards and thought they were eligible to vote.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement was tasked with carrying out

the arrests, and some of the agents were almost apologetic as they did so, body camera footage showed. Several former agents recently told The Washington Post they believe that DeSantis has politicized the department.

Of the 19 people arrested initially, 12 were registered as Democrats and at least 13 are Black, the Times/Herald found.

Attorneys who represented the former felons argued in court that the prosecutions were a “waste of time” and done to “make a political point.”

The arrests represented a more aggressive approach to voter fraud cases than some other prosecutors had taken in the past. In Lake County, for example, the Republican state attorney declined to bring charges against six convicted sex offenders who voted in 2020 because they did not “willfully” commit the crime, as was required by law.

## Sex offender registry can result in homelessness

By [Kelsey Turner](#) . . . Cross, director of Oregon City-based nonprofit organization [Free on the Outside](#), which provides housing and recovery for formerly incarcerated individuals, knows what strings to pull to get people housed. While working in Hillsboro west of Portland, he successfully sheltered people of all criminal backgrounds. But those he turns away often have one thing in common: Their names are on Oregon’s Sex Offender Registry.

“I got housing for guys that committed murder — easy, no problem,” said Cross, 63. “Robbery, drug dealing, identity theft, almost anything, I could find 10 beds a day. I had a hard time finding one bed a week for someone with a sex offense.”

Recent proposals in Oregon and Washington aim to increase community notification when offenders move to an area. In Oregon, a bill introduced this year would have expanded the state’s public registry to include lower-level offenders. In Washington, proposed legislation would have required public notification and meetings before the

state could make plans to house high-risk offenders in a community. . . .

Nearly 5% of the people on Oregon’s Sex Offender Registry — about 1,500 — are homeless, according to Oregon State Police data. In Multnomah County, the rate is more than double, at 11%. Across the state border in Clark County, people on the registry experience homelessness at about 25 times the rate of the general population, according to an InvestigateWest analysis of county homelessness data. . . .

“This sort of ostracism and lack of opportunity winds up increasing the likelihood of somebody turning to crime,” said University of Michigan Law School Professor J.J. Prescott, who researches public safety effects of sex offender laws.

Cross, himself a registered Level 1 sex offender — for having a sexual relationship with a teenager more than 30 years ago — knows firsthand how the registry keeps offenders homeless.

After serving his jail time, Cross began

using methamphetamine. He couchsurfing for a while before ending up on the streets in the dead of winter — his rock bottom that became a wake-up call.

Determined to get his life back on track, he applied for an apartment and was immediately denied because of his sex offense, he said. He then found housing with a landlord willing to overlook his background after being upfront with the landlord about his conviction. “It’s really hard to find a place to live,” Cross said. “Unless you find a program like ours, or some other people that have sex offender-friendly housing, it’s almost impossible.”

While sex offender registration and notification laws [have not](#) been shown to reduce recidivism rates, stable housing has, according to the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#). For example, a [2022 study](#) in Michigan that Prescott co-authored found lack of a fixed address is distinctly associated with a higher risk of rearrest among individuals with a sex offense conviction.



## WI: Defense win! Multiple convictions in same case on same date don't require lifetime sex offender registration

Source: [wisconsinappeals.net](http://wisconsinappeals.net)

State v. Corey T. Rector, 2023 WI 41, 5/23/23 affirming a case certified by the court of appeals, 2020AP1213; case activity (including briefs)

Rector pleaded to five counts of possessing child pornog-

raphy in a single case. He'd never been convicted of anything before. The sentencing judge ordered that he be placed on the sex offender registry until 15 years after the end of his sentence or supervision. The Department of Corrections then wrote the judge to say that, in its view, any two or more convictions of registry-eligible sex of-

fenses trigger mandatory registration for life. The judge stuck to his guns and reiterated the 15-year registry requirement. The state appealed, and the court of appeals certified the case. The state supreme court now holds, 4-3, that Rector is not required to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

## Janice's Journal: Best Way to Serve and Protect Victims is to Better Serve Offenders

Source The Alliance for Constitutional Sex Offense Laws (ACSOL)

The United Kingdom (U.K.) is not known for having an open mind regarding individuals required to register. Instead, the U.K. is known for stopping and returning to the country-of-origin individuals required to register even if the individuals have entered the U.K. via airport on their way to another destination. In such cases, the U.K. has returned the individuals to their country-of-origin at the individuals' expense.

Therefore, it was surprising, perhaps even shocking, to hear the voice of reason in a government report issued recently in the U.K. First, the report noted that there has been a significant growth in the number of people required to register in the U.K. Next, the report compared that growth to a decrease in the number of police officers.

The report then concluded that these two factors have placed "unprecedented pressures" on both policing and the criminal justice system within the U.K. Instead of recommending that new laws be passed that harm registrants and their families, the report surprisingly stated that "the best way to serve and protect the victims is to better

serve offenders."

We can only hope and pray that the U.K. government follows this recommendation. And that other countries, including the United States, follow their example.

Where could this lead?

It could lead to the total elimination of sex offender registries. Or for countries not yet ready to take that leap, it could lead to the elimination of public registries.

The elimination of sex offender registries could take a few years because governments, in general, move slowly. While we are waiting for that ultimate outcome, the U.K. could better serve individuals required to register by allowing them to enter the U.K. The country could start by allowing these individuals to travel through the U.K.'s airports, including Heathrow, which is a major hub for overseas travel. And when the U.K. discovers that individuals required to register don't pose a current danger, they can enjoy the travel dollars they spend.

While the rest of the countries wait for the U.K. to eliminate their sex

offender registry, those countries could better serve individuals required to register by shortening parole and probation periods. This includes, of course, mandatory treatment programs as well as the requirement to take multiple polygraph exams which often last the entire duration of an individual's period of supervision.

Those countries could also better serve individuals required to register by removing all lists of individuals required to register from both public and private websites. This would not only protect those individuals but also their families from vigilante violence.

And those countries could help individuals required to register to find both housing and employment upon their re-entry. This in turn would boost the economies of those countries.

Can we only wait and see if the recommendations of the U.K. are followed in that country as well as around the world? *Or could we Show Up – Stand Up – Speak Up in support of the registrant community in the U.K.?*



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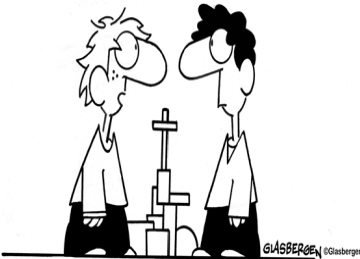
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Hebrew 13:3 - Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Remember if you change your address you need to let us know if you want to continue to receive this newsletter



"I'm not sure what religion my family is.  
It's the one that forbids running with scissors.  
And eating before dinner is the worst sin."

## Speaking up for Jesus

By Don Johnston

I was thinking about standing up for Jesus. The courage it takes to speak up sometimes. I remember times that, the Holy Spirit urged me to do something and I ignore the leading. The guilt that followed was always something I did not care for.

One Christmas day I was in prison in the chow line for lunch. The Holy Spirit led it on my heart to say a prayer for everybody aloud. I was afraid and did not want to do this. But I remember how I grieved the Holy Spirit in times past and the feeling I had. Therefore, I asked the Lord I would do this if you would open up a space of front for me to pray. When I got to the front somebody left the front table and I set down my tray. I then was standing up, raised my hands up in the air, and yelled as loud as I could **JESUS**. The chow hall held about 200 people the place went quiet.

I then said, "I wish everybody a Merry Christmas. And would like to say a Christmas prayer for everybody". During this time we go and wish everybody a Merry Christmas and smiles along the way. Then the next day back to our frowns. Wish we could continue the feeling of Christmas.

I then asked everybody to bow their

heads and join me in a prayer. I then proceeded to bless our food and bless everybody in the chow hall and wish everybody a Merry Christmas. I expected a dinner roll to be thrown at me when my head was bowed and my eyes were closed. Nothing happened, and a few people even thanked me for praying for them.

Sometimes we need the courage to stand up for Jesus. In A.D. 155, the early church father Polycarp was threatened with death by fire for his faith in Christ. He replied, "For eighty and six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. And how can I now blaspheme my King who saved me?" Polycarp's response can be an inspiration for us and help us face extreme trials because of our faith in Jesus our King.

A failure to speak or act honorably as a believer in Jesus sometimes happens. Such occasions, whether in the chow hall, or outside in the yard or in your dorm, we can speak out for Jesus. When those failures occur, we must briefly dust ourselves off and turn to Jesus, the One who died for us. He'll help us to be faithful to him and courageously live for him daily in difficult places. I hope we all can have the courage to speak out.



**Circle of Concern** has gone **ZOOM**

Circle of Concern is aimed at breaking down isolation and fear by providing a safe place for registrants and their loved ones to get together, build community, and learn ways to step out and take charge of their lives and overcome the stigma they face. The Circle of Concern is a group of concerned registered citizens, family and friends that meet together on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We are meeting this month on **July 16, 2023** at 3 pm—4 p.m. MST (Mountain Standard Time). We will meet on Zoom. We encourage and try to help each other. It is a safe place to share our strengths and struggles. We hope you will join us. If you are planning to attend call Don at **(505) 315-7940**. He will send you the link to join by computer or phone. You can contact him at the number above or email him at [donmagicjohnston@gmail.com](mailto:donmagicjohnston@gmail.com)