



Companions in Hope

Dear Legislator,

As a co-founder of Companions in Hope, I am writing to express **our support for the Child Victims Act** now being debated in your state. We strongly encourage you to vote to extend or eliminate the statute of limitations and support the much-needed civil window.

When a child is sexually assaulted, the emotional pain is much too deep for him or her to come to terms with it in what the legal community might consider a timely manner. To expect such is unrealistic and places an **undue burden upon victims of crime**. Rushing a child's acknowledgement of heinous acts done unto them inflicts upon them further injury. They must heal in their own time, when they are emotionally better equipped to face it.

Unfortunately, the current statute of limitations denies victims of such abuse this necessary period of time and emotional healing. In effect, it **denies justice** to these victims of unspeakable crimes. Innocent survivors are deprived of any chance to legally right the wrongs that forever changed their lives - a basic tenet of the American system of justice which is necessary to maintain a sense of moral balance in our society at large.

I use the term 'survivors', however, not every individual survives the trauma of childhood sexual abuse. Too many have only been able to end their pain by ending their lives. I have no doubt that had they been able to achieve some semblance of justice in their case - to have their day in court, they may have survived. The statute of limitations unfairly prevents this natural course from taking place and becomes a **blockade in the healing** of crime victims.

Not only will removing the statute of limitations open the gates of justice for those who have suffered such abuse but it will also do much to help prevent children from being abused. The statute of limitations allows perpetrators who are predisposed to abusing children free to abuse again and again. **Close this loophole if for no other reason than to protect children.**

The opponents of this bill - particularly Catholic bishops and their lawyers - try to make this issue about money. It is not. **It's about healing the wounded and keeping kids safe!**

Sincerely,

Kate Bochte
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