

Justice for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse in PA

By the time many survivors of child sexual abuse in Pennsylvania begin to deal with their abuse, they are well past their 30th birthday and the window for justice is closed by the civil statute of limitations. Many people have worked for decades to extend or eliminate the statutes for child sexual abuse so survivors have access to justice, and those who harmed are identified and held accountable so that children are protected.

Last month, after a state wide effort that included a push from people of faith from various denominations, the House overwhelming passed bill 1947 with a vote of 180 to 15. Rep. Mark Rozzi from Berks County, a survivor of abuse by a priest, powerfully gave voice to survivors, opening his colleagues' eyes and hearts to why there should never be a statute of limitation on prosecuting sexually-based crimes against children and also why it remains so important to give survivors extended time to pursue a civil action.

The legislation is now in the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Senator Stewart Greenleaf (R-Montgomery/Bucks). People of faith can add their voices to the swell of those urging justice for survivors and protection of children by asking Senator Greenleaf to move the bill in its current form to the Senate without delay, and to champion its passage

As it stands, the bill will:

1. Eliminate the criminal statutes of limitations for certain child sexual assault cases
2. Extend the civil statute of limitations from at 30 to age 50 to give survivors additional time to attempt to seek damages
3. The extension of the civil statutes would be "retroactive" for survivors older than 30 but younger than 50 – in other words, those people would now have until age 50 to file.

Samaritan SafeChurch will be circulating a sign-on letter to Senator Greenleaf to clergy and religious leaders to encourage him to stand up for children, and survivors. To sign on, contact Linda Crockett@ [717 560 9991](tel:7175609991) or email Lcrockett@scclanc.org

You may also contact him directly.

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