

Senate Judiciary Committee SB317 Testimony from Kari Crump

Dear Chair Senator Kellie Warren, Vice Chair Senator Rick Wilborn and ranking minority member Ethan Corson;

My name is Kari Crump, I live in Junction City Kansas and I am here today in support of Senate Bill 317, which gives a voice to childhood sexual assault survivors like myself.

I'm a mother of 3 children ages 24, 22 and 17. I have a beautiful grandson that is 7 months old, i have two brothers, one older, one younger, nieces, nephews, my mother and father are still alive and I get up every morning get ready for work, do my job to the best of my abilities, pay my bills and deal with everyday stresses just like everyone in this room. I am any of you, I am any of your loved ones or children and I am a survivor of childhood sexual assault.

In 1985 at daycare provider's home in Kansas, a family member sexually assaulted me in my sleep. My 8 year old body and brain did what it's miraculously designed to do. Shut down and protect me. I froze, but remember every painful detail to this day and disgustingly, all of this happened while his daughter was asleep two feet away from me.

For years I blamed myself out of shame and feeling like somehow, this was my fault. It's only now as a 45 year old adult, who has spent years in trauma therapy, that I NOW know, 8 year old Kari didn't even have the vocabulary necessary to tell an adult, even if that was a safe option, which at the time, it wasn't. I didn't know the actual words to tell adults what happened to me. This is why survivors come forward later in life, it's too painful and it's extremely hard to talk about.

The event never leaves my memory, no matter how much therapy, this will never go away. This is my truth, and I have accepted and chosen to speak out, I realize I can't change the past, but I can help others moving forward. It is only now at age 45 that I have worked up the courage and actually just a few days ago is when I told my parents about this horrific incident for the first time. That's how important this legislation is to me. I have been in trauma therapy every week of over 2 years JUST to be able to tell my parents. And now here I am just a few days after telling my parents to be here sharing my story for the first time publicly. That's how important this legislature is to me.

If holding my candle of truth and bravery to speak out, sparks only one flame in one other survivor to come forward and seek justice and freedom from these terrible secrets, then I

consider my life purposeful. This is my story, it's sad, it's maddening and it happens to too many children, and we all deserve justice.

Realistically I can't save all the children, stop all the predators or fix all the laws myself. But I stand here before you all today asking you to take that noble step in helping all childhood sexual assault survivors in Kansas. Please change this antiquated law and give power back to those who desperately need it. The survivors. We are tired of carrying around this pain, shame, fear, hurt and feeling like we have no options. It's like rubbing salt in a wound every day of our lives. Please pass SB 317 and give us a fighting chance.

I'll leave you with this quote: If you are in a place where you are more powerful than the people around you are, be sure to listen as much as you talk, and if you are less powerful be sure to talk as much as you listen. You all hold the power, many of us spoken. Let's move forward and do the right thing for childhood sexual assault survivors.