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**Testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee
In Support of SB167
February 20, 2013**

Chairman King and Committee Members,

Our associations support this proposed expansion of the statute of limitations as contained in SB167. Violent sexual offenses victimizing our children leave a lifetime of struggles for the victims. Many times these young victims are psychologically compelled to not report this crime. As we have all seen in news reports, and our deputies and officers frequently see firsthand, these victims are often in their mid-twenties by the time they come forward with the allegations. These victims deserve their day in court when the allegations can still be proven regardless of the delay. Just as importantly, we must take steps necessary to assure the perpetrators of these crimes are stopped from continuing their criminal attacks on others.

By their very nature these cases can be difficult to prove. But we have seen many cases where such proof is still available. We have seen cases in recent years where offenders being prosecuted in similar crimes have confessed to crimes outside the statute of limitations. The result is no charges possible in regards to these crimes. Whether the proof to go to trial is present must be weighed on a case by case basis by the prosecutor. But whether a case can go forward should be based on that evidence weighed along with the time delay in reporting. We are confident prosecutors will not proceed with charging if there is inadequate evidence to substantiate the allegation. They will only proceed if they believe they can prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt.

It is our opinion, the current five year period beyond the victim's 18th birthday is not an adequate time in too many cases. We believe the proposed ten year period beyond the victim's 18th birthday is a reasonable balance between the public safety needs of prosecution and the rights of the defendant.

We encourage you to recommend the bill favorable for passage.

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