

HB #2306
Judiciary Committee
Rep. Fred Patton, Chair

Written Testimony in Support of HB 2306

Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

When I was between 14 and 16, I often was invited to go camping at Pomme Dr Terre Lake in Missouri. These trips were with my best friend, her mother, stepfather, stepbrother, and one of his friends. We all slept in one big tent after a day of swimming and fishing. I was touched and groped by my abuser, my best friend's stepfather. It was my secret.

That secret led to relationship difficulties and further abuse as I searched for love and approval. My fear and later denial that anything earlier occurred in my youth eventually was pushed far back in my memory.

January 2006, I attended the funeral service for my abuser, having hidden those memories until I looked at pictures which included camping times from the early 1970's. Suddenly I was covered in chills and felt physically ill. My memories card file pulled out the memory of horrors.

Guilt is too often carried by the victim. Fear of being punished for "letting the abuse occur" or of your best friend being taken away from you is real. I was a well-behaved girl, doing what was expected of me.

I carried this guilt from the return of these memories until I was able to face my hurt and fears through intensive counselling and attending a yearlong Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) program.

I was diagnosed with PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, and Borderline Personality Disorder.

If these memories had attacked me while my perpetrator we're still living, I could have done nothing but live with the horrors. Please allow others whose innocence has been violated to have recourse no matter the length of time which has passed.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story of abuse and hopes that others will have legal recourse.

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