

**House Committee on Judiciary  
Hearing on House Bill 2306  
Hearing Date – February 11, 2020**

**Written Testimony in support of HB 2306  
Usha Reddi**

Good afternoon Chair Patton, Vice Chair Ralph and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary. My name is Usha Reddi, survivor of childhood sexual abuse.

Extending the time that victims of child sex abuse have to bring a cause of action (HB2306)

As someone who is a survivor of sexual abuse from the ages of 10 to 16, I did not file any charges until I was 53, nearly 40 years after the abuse began. Kansas has already done the right thing by having no statute of limitations for criminal sex abuse, and it should be the same thing for civil. In my case, the abuse began when I lived in Virginia, and continued when we moved to Ohio. I could not file any charges in the state of Ohio due to their statute of limitations. In Virginia, however, I was able to file charges since they have no statute of limitations. We were able to get a conviction in that case, even without any physical evidence. But the burden of proof was on me the victim.

Sexual abuse is about power. The perpetrator has power in the commission of the crime, and the victim has the power when filing charges. Having no statute of limitations provides the victim with power to seek justice. It took me a long time before I felt I had the energy and support system to even come forward to even talk about it. I have friends who have been through similar situations who will never speak about their experience. However, if they should find such support in her life, they should have the right to seek justice in the manner they see fit – criminal or civil. The perpetrator should never be able to be at ease with his crime just because the statute of limitations is up. In cases of child sexual abuse, it is usually someone who the child trusted, which makes it much more difficult to speak up about it.

In my situation, I actually thought about seeking justice 10 years ago, but I was thinking of filing charges in Ohio, where the statute of limitations had run out. Only recently did I learn that Virginia had no statute of limitations. That removed a huge barrier for me to be able to seek justice.

Sexual abuse does not have any physical scars. The scars are emotional, traumatic, and long-lasting. I hid my scars deep inside for many years. Yet I knew that I wanted to seek justice. I felt I had no power, with too many barriers in front of me. Knowing that there was no statute of limitations in VA gave me some power in the situation to at least seek what justice I could.

Having been through all of this, as a survivor, I realize that we need to make it easier for victims to come forward, not harder. Having a statute of limitations is a very restrictive

barrier. Men with power have the upper hand already, and even when such cases come forward, the perpetrators are portrayed as the victim. We need to put the power into the hands of the real victims. False accusations of sexual abuse represent a very small portion of all allegations. Out of all sexual assault allegations, less than 1% end up in time served by the perpetrator. The system does not empower victims to come forward, and with all of the barriers, few victims actually receive the justice they deserve.

If criminal sexual assault has no statute of limitations, there is no reason for civil cases to have them either. Victims need to have the power to file charges as they see fit when they are ready. Perpetrators should be accountable no matter how long ago they committed the crimes. The heinous nature of the crime makes it such that the victim will never forget. It is only just that the perpetrator should always be accountable for paying the price for such a crime.

For all of these reasons, I am in support of HB 2306.

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