

TO: The Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee
Senator Andrew J. McDonald, Co-Chairman
Representative Michael P. Lawlor, Co-Chairman
Senator Mary Ann Handley, Vice-Chair
Representative James Spallone, Vice-Chair
Senator John A. Kissel, Ranking Member
Representative Robert Farr, Ranking Member

FROM: Miss Manirah Agans

RE: Public Hearing Testimony in Support of
SB 618, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATUTE OF
LIMITATIONS
FOR THE CRIMINAL PROSECUTION OF OFFENSES
INVOLVING
THE SEXUAL ASSAULT OF MINORS

DATE: March 20, 2006

Bill SB 618 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR THE CRIMINAL PROSECUTION OF OFFENSES INVOLVING THE SEXUAL ASSAULT OF MINORS has come to my attention. Although I am not personally a victim of sexual assault, I am a witness of the extensive emotional and psychological damage that emerges from it. I would like to express my utmost support for this bill, and strongly request that it not only be passed here, but ultimately be brought to the floor of the General Assembly and be made into law.

Today, I am writing on behalf of Miss Dahleet Imswiler, whom I have had the pleasure being friends with for the past seven years, and who will be giving a testimony of her firsthand experience with sexual assault. The time frame of my friendship with Miss Imswiler has made me a witness to the horrific repercussions of sexual assault, before and after it is revealed by the victim. Before Miss Imswiler had told anyone of her assault, I was fully aware that something was amiss. Her intense distrust and paranoia of men reached far beyond any normal feelings of annoyance. She would exhibit obsessive/compulsive tendencies, and she could hardly be made to eat. She was constantly tired, although she took frequent naps, and finally she began to take medication for a depression that I could not understand. However, I found these external manifestations far easier to overlook than the internal pain that seemed to envelope her.

As a friend, it hurt me to see her slowly losing interest in her young life, of which she had so much left to live. It was truly as if I was watching her die inside. I hope, as I'm sure she does too, that bringing this painful memory into the light will help heal the scars from her past and give her joy for the future. I know that all sexual assault victims feel this way.

I am sharing these ramifications of sexual assault, not because you are oblivious of them, but that you may note their lasting effects. Day after day, a victim must contend with the haunts of the past, yet after a certain length of time, the offender is able to live as innocent, without fear of prosecution. Hence, our society seemingly condones the actions of sexual offenders and diminishes the injuries done to victims. Such vile offences should not be allowed to seem less atrocious simply because a period of time has gone by. Although it is left to Miss Imswiler to restore her past, it is unjust that she must live in fear of facing an unabashed criminal or live in suspicion that someone else may be assaulted by her offender. Although I write on Miss Imswiler's behalf this day, I write in mind of many others friends and of society as a whole. I would ask that you help bring closure to such a horrific experience by demonstrating that her story is worth hearing and merits the necessary prosecution of sexual offenders, by the passing of Bill SB 618.

Thank you for allowing me to bring testimony in support of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Miss Manirah Agans