



**Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.**

---

96 Pitkin Street · East Hartford, CT 06108 · Phone: 860-282-9881 · Fax: 860-291-9335 · [www.connsacs.org](http://www.connsacs.org)

Testimony of Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services  
**In Support of HB 5473 AN ACT CONCERNING ACTIONS TO RECOVER DAMAGES FOR  
THE SEXUAL ABUSE, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OR SEXUAL ASSAULT OF A MINOR**

Anna Doroghazi, Director of Public Policy and Communication  
Judiciary Committee, March 17, 2010

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Anna Doroghazi, and I am the Director of Public Policy and Communication for Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONNSACS). CONNSACS is the statewide association of Connecticut's nine community-based rape crisis programs. We believe that survivors of child sexual abuse are never too old for justice, and we therefore wish to speak in support of HB 5473.

I occasionally receive phone calls from survivors of sexual violence who, after years of silence, have finally found the strength to publicly confront the abuse that they experienced as children. Some find the courage to disclose when the discovery of new material evidence in their case assuages the fear of not being believed. Others have confided in siblings and discovered that their entire family suffered at the hands of a single perpetrator. Still others tried to speak out years ago but were shamed or intimidated into silence. Whatever their reasons for coming forward, these survivors want to know what they can do to hold their offenders accountable. I respond to each of them with the same question: How old are you? Asking a person's age to start a conversation about sexual abuse feels arbitrary and callous, but when justice has an expiration date, it is the only way to begin.

The pain of child sexual violence stays with a person for a lifetime, yet under current Connecticut law, the hope of a remedy only endures until a person's forty-eighth birthday. We hold survivors accountable to a timeline, but in doing so, we fail to hold offenders accountable for their actions. Approximately 30% of child sex offenders have more than ten victims.<sup>1</sup> It is heartbreaking to think that some serial abusers continue to find new victims even as their first survivors grow up and age beyond the statute of limitations.

Eliminating the civil statute of limitations for child sexual abuse cases would not be without precedent. Alaska, Maine, and Delaware have already repealed the statute of limitations for civil actions related to child sexual abuse, and legislation to eliminate the civil statute of limitations has been considered in the past year in Oregon, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Arizona. Connecticut has the opportunity to be a leader in this movement to support survivors and make perpetrators answer for the harm they have caused.

---

<sup>1</sup> Elliott, M., Browne, K., & Kilcoyne, J. (1995). Child sexual abuse prevention: What offenders tell us. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 5, 579-594.

There is no good time to make justice inaccessible. Survivors of child sexual abuse need support along their path to healing, and HB 5473 send a clear message that this process should not be subject to arbitrary deadlines.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Anna Doroghazi  
[anna@connsacs.org](mailto:anna@connsacs.org)