

Testimony of Naza Bungu

Good Evening Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Naza Bungu, and I am a Licensed Professional Counselor and own a private practice in Milford, CT.

The "Give Victim's Time/ Time's Up Bill is important to me for many reasons. Currently, the State of Connecticut only offers 5 years for the civil and criminal statute of limitations. I am asking that we remove the statute of limitations. There are several reasons why victims do not come forward: they may have been threatened, there is a fear of retaliation by the abuser or fear of how they would be judged by others. These reasons occur for all survivors of sexual assault, including men, women, and children, but I know these reasons all too well for myself.

I was sexually assaulted by Michael Britt when I was 16 years old. I did not report it until I was 18 years old for fear that my mother would blame me for what happened to me and remove me from the house, leaving me with nowhere to live. She was born and raised in Kosovo, so her views on assault are very skewed; within our culture, women are not seen as equals. At the age of 18 and on my own as I had no advocates to help me, reported this to the, Bridgeport Police Department. Nothing was done. And if you research Michael Britt, he sexually assault several underaged females, for which he only received 3 years in prison! Three years? This is not justice given the long-term and permanent psychological damage that victims have to endure as a result of sexual abuse.

I was also sexually assaulted by Antoine Sistrunk on 1/14/2006. I reported the assault on 3/24/2006 with the Bridgeport Police Department, but former Detective Dwayne McBride did not investigate. There is no report on file. Even though I reported my assault, with no support from the Police Department and no advocates, at that time I lost hope for finding any kind of justice.

I recently discovered that Antoine Sistrunk was applying to become a police officer in 7/2018. At this point, I filed with Bridgeport's Internal Affairs. The investigation was closed in 11/2018 with no resolve because of "no evidence" as former Det. McBride did not follow through with the investigation. Due to McBride not investigating, a warrant was never filed and the police department wasn't able to red flag the original report that I filed in 2006 when they were doing the background check for Antoine Sistrunk. If McBride followed through, a rapist would not be currently serving as a police officer. I am still currently residing in Bridgeport, CT and do not feel safe knowing that my rapist is supposed to "protect and serve" in my town. How are the women in this city supposed to be protected when the offender is wearing a badge? I cannot comprehend that as a human being, as a woman, or as a licensed counselor.

In regards to this particular case, I spoke to the following people: The Mayor's Office, Police Chief A J Perez, Captain Fitzgerald, Internal Affairs Office, the Police Commissioners, and the Chief State's Attorney's Office. I was disappointed yet again by the "law" due to the statute of limitations. Connecticut is supposedly considered a progressive state, but how is that we have a statute of limitations of 5 years for sexual abuse? We need to do a better job in protecting our people and to provide the support and justice that is deserved. I truly hope that you consider the testimonies brought forth to you regarding the removal of the statute of limitations and to consider all survivors who will continue to be affected by it if the current law remains in effect.

Please consider the damage that sexual assault causes. It's bad enough that the victim's have to endure the psychological and physical pain as a result of the assault, but also consider the guilt, shame, and

embarrassment they experience when they finally have the courage to file a report and the legal system states that "it's too late". This law tells survivors that it is too late to have a voice, to receive justice, and to prevent it from happening to others.

Let's change this. NOW. Let's be better. Let's do better. Make a difference in our society. It is 2019 and it's time for victim's voices to be heard and not silenced. The statute of limitations only signifies that victims will continue to be silenced. I do not wish this experience on anyone, but please imagine what you would want for your loved ones, family members, children, or friends and would go through if they survivors of sexual assault. What would you want the law to say to them? We protect you and thank you for coming forward? Or It is too late for you to find justice. Please pass the Give Victims Time/ Time's Up Bill.

Thank you for your consideration. You may reach me directly at (203) 848-9350 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Naza Bungu, LPC, LADC

(Survivor of Sexual Abuse)