



**Susan B. Anthony Project**  
SAFETY • HEALING • GROWTH

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**Testimony of Jeanne S. Fusco**  
**Executive Director, Susan B. Anthony Project, Inc.**  
**Committee on Judiciary**  
**April 1, 2019**

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

My name is Jeanne Fusco, and I am the Executive Director at Susan B. Anthony Project, a non profit sexual violence (and domestic violence) services center serving 18 towns and 2 cities in northwestern CT. Our organization responds to the crises of women, men and children who have experienced sexual violence.

I am writing to ask you to support SB 3 An Act Combatting Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment. I also ask that you recognize that SB913, An Act Concerning the Extension of the Statute of Limitations for Prosecution of Sexual Assault which extends the statute of limitations to 10 years, a term not long enough, is insufficient to address the needs of survivors of sexual violence.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of SB 3, An Act Combatting Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment .

Connecticut law provides survivors of sexual violence with a five-year statute of limitations for most sex assault crimes. Connecticut has the third shortest statute of limitations in the country and the shortest overall, in New England. Connecticut must be a leader in the response to these heinous, often premeditated, crimes. At this time, 28 other states in the United States stand ahead of Connecticut regarding this statute of limitations.

For many survivors the current statute of limitations does not even allow a victim the time it may take to come forward to acknowledge the sexual violence that has been perpetrated against them. Investigations, even when sex assault is immediately reported can take an inordinately long time, all while the clock ticks toward the 5 year limit in the statute.

The impact of sexual violence lasts a lifetime. From the moment of that assault, nothing is really ever the same for a victim. Over more than 25 years of providing services to survivors, I have come to understand the ways in which trauma has impact upon victims' lives.

Trauma and its effects can leave victims feeling uncertain of their experiences, unable to navigate through the systems of reporting , and fearful of the ways in which they will be portrayed in the public's eye. While victims want their offenders to serve time for the crimes perpetrated against them, victims experience apprehension of re-living the details of one of the most intimate attacks one will

ever face and sharing those details during police investigation and the judicial process are among the reasons victims often delay their disclosure.

Often, in my role, folks ask, "how could I support a survivor of sexual violence"?

I always begin by saying, believe it when a victim tells you their story of sexual assault. Tell them it is not their fault. Offer to refer them to professionals in the sexual violence prevention work of Connecticut who will make clear the systems' processes.

I am also often left to tell a victim whose experience has lead to delayed disclosure that the statute of limitations has run out. There is no way that I can truly disclose, from the stand point of an advocate, the look and mix of emotions that a survivor has in their eyes, expressed as a combination of sadness, anger, frustration, exhaustion and yes, defeat.

This bill is so very important to me, because at the end of any day, I hope to be able to replace fear with hope for victims I am still to meet. Extending the statute of limitations for sexual assault victims allows that for every victim in Connecticut.

I urge you to pass SB 3 An Act Combatting Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment to give victims time.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanne Fusco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeanne Fusco