

Andrea Michaud  
63 Shawnee Rd.  
East Hartford, CT 06118  
(860) 830-9542  
[gagalaws@att.net](mailto:gagalaws@att.net)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Andrea Michaud of East Hartford and I am in favor, in part, of SB-3, An Act Combatting Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment. I am for the elimination of the Statute of Limitations for the Prosecution of Sexual Assault. It's a subject matter that is uncomfortable and ugly. I hope I can speak with words that you can hear.

I want to tell you about a girl I knew that was so smart and funny and loved to show off! But by the time she was 16 years old she attempted suicide for the first time, (one of many). While hospitalized the secrets of incest were exposed, inadvertently, by her. That was in 1975. Back then the best psychiatric, therapeutic thinking was to tell, to expose the festering secret immediately. So, her entire large family was called in and she was told to tell. Spurred on by the counselor, she finally whispered her secret. She was not educated, informed nor empowered enough to know what was to follow. Nor was the family.

Nothing was ever the same again. No support prior, no support after, and no consequences, except for the total fracture of the family, of which SHE had just done! She was never treated the same. She was damaged goods and avoided, or treated as fragile. No one talked to her the same. She was deserted on an island of shame. Facts got twisted, minimized and denied.

She had already found drugs and alcohol by then, but after that first hospitalization, she began to frequent the local bars and put herself in dangerous situations with men. She left CT at age 18 and landed in California. After years of drug and alcohol abuse and depression she was unable to maintain gainful employment. She was unable to stay in any meaningful loving relationship. She married a very angry and abusive man. She would leave periodically, but would always end up going back. Not until her children were born did she finally and successfully have the needed motivation to leave for good. The kids were worth saving! They are awesome adults today. I know this because they are *my* kids. This is *my* story. I work very hard on believing my life has meaning and worth. It's ongoing. I suffer with PTSD, but it's manageable. I have help. I have a loving family and friends today. I have amazing support, and I have medication.

We've come a long way since the 1970's in regard to the way victims are treated therapeutically. With support and empowerment, victims can control if and when, how, and to whom they want to disclose. However, there is still a tremendous amount of stigma surrounding sexual assault victims, both male and female. Being stereotyped, not being believed and being judged makes coming forward a very difficult and personal decision. It HAS to be the victim's call!

Great strides have been made in successful therapies that lead to recovery and survival, but there's one more thing we can do and it's landed at your doorstep. The change is now in your hands. And that is to rid the obstacle that is the Statute of Limitations for the Prosecution of Sexual Assault.

Victims need time to come forward. But still only about 10% do so. So, we have silent victims and active pedophiles everywhere. Predators go where children are and seek jobs and avocations to get their needs met. So anywhere kids are you can safely assume that predators are not too far away. We need to identify these guys. Also, predators do not stop abusing as they age. A newly identified 60 or 70 year old perpetrator is still a pedophile worth stopping. Current law gives the abusers a pass, *carte blanche*, to get what they want with little risk.

For example; one of my abusers became a father and subsequently sexually assaulted all three of his daughters. The oldest of which lived with the threat on a daily basis, believing she was protecting her sisters. That would be my niece. She was denied justice when, as an adult, she courageously decided to go to the police to press charges on her father. It was on that day that we found out the hard way about the Statute of Limitations. It's too late for us. Even if you do the right thing and eliminate this limitation, it will only be effective going forward. This abuser targets nubile pubescents. This is a horrendous, devastating, life changing crime! He is a criminal and should be in jail. And yet, this perverted, pathological predator is out there, right now, as we speak, living, working and yes, worshiping freely in our community immune and untouchable. You would never know. Who's in your community?

So, there is a couple arguments out there. One of which is that over time evidence degrades, memories fade and witnesses die. No doubt. The victim and their council will have to weigh those things and still have to prove their case in a court of law. They should be given the chance to do so.

Another argument however, is the cost on our state economically, medically and financially created by the impact of sexual abuse on its victims, of which I can personally attest to. From hospitalizations, (in-patient and out), medications, specialized therapies, incarcerations, basic needs, welfare, of which I have gratefully availed myself to over the years.

CT has led in gun law changes and in immigration policies. We can also become part of the solution now, by joining with other states that have already eliminated the Statute of Limitations for the Prosecution of Sex Crimes. You can get this done for the people of CT.

Let's let these predators know that times up and that the joke...is now...on them!!

Thank you.