

IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF CONNECTICUT
JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
TESTIMONY OF STACIE RUMENAP
PRESIDENT, STOP CHILD PREDATORS
REGARDING SB 3

Chairman Winfield, Chairman Stafstrom, esteemed members of the committee, and fellow stakeholders, I am Stacie Rumenap, President of Stop Child Predators. Stop Child Predators is a national non-profit advocacy and education organization dedicated to the protection of children who have been subject to abuse, most notably sexually related abuse. Our work includes reforms to the mandatory reporting network required by Meagan's Law, reforming the ability of government to control the actions of sex offenders known as Jessica's Law, and other vital policies which impact survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Today, I am here to give support of SB3 as a part of a national movement to give voices to those who were sexually abused and denied justice as children.

As we know, justice delayed is often justice denied. In instances of childhood sexual abuse, this is all too often the case. As we all learned in horror in the summer of 2018, a Pennsylvania Grand Jury uncovered decades of actual sexual abuse by clergy as well as coercive and intimidating behavior by the leadership of dioceses of Pennsylvania to hide the identities of the abusers who were preying on the children of the faithful. This Grand Jury report stated that there were hundreds of abusers and thousands of victims who have gone voiceless in the justice system due, in large part, to the actions either covering up or coercing families and victims to remain silent. These measures included threatening ex communication for those who came forward with their experience to seek justice.

This grand jury report is but one of many such reports that demonstrate the complexity of work undertaken to delay survivors coming forward, which has now become a denial of their ability to seek justice. These actions have not only denied these survivors justice in the form of criminal prosecution but also in the form of civil litigation to hold the abuser, and the institution which engaged in covering up this reprehensible behavior. Over the course of our history as an organization, we have worked with thousands of victims and survivors who seek justice. From Florida, to California, to the Native American Reservations in South Dakota, nowhere is safe from

the actions of predators and their accomplices who seek to hide the true identities of these predators.

Senate Bill 3 is a step in the right direction to give victims and survivors the ability to bring their experiences forward to seek justice. This bill does not guarantee outcomes, but it does guarantee the ability to identify predators, accomplices and others to be publicly identified and to be held accountable. Removing the civil and criminal statute of limitations for all cases in the future, as well as extending an opportunity for survivors to revive their claims and come forward in circumstances where the statute of limitations has expired returns voices to the survivors and permits justice to be served.

Concerns about stale evidence and the inability of the accused to defend themselves are not wrongly placed. However, these concerns should not outweigh the need of a survivor of child sexual abuse to seek justice. If there is stale evidence or a lack of evidence, the justice system will address it through litigation and the application of rules of evidence and procedure. Procedures exist to ensure that baseless or meritless claims are treated accordingly, and dismissed.

Identifying predators, accomplices and others who are engaged in either preying on children or protecting those who do prey on children will ensure that our children are safer. Senate Bill 3 is good policy, brought for the right reason. For all these reasons and for the thousands of survivors who are seeking a voice, I encourage a yes vote. Thank you.