

No Time Limit for Justice Act

Congresswoman Gwen Moore and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

Endorsed by: National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NSVRC), CHILD USA, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC), CHILD USA Advocacy, SNAP, Child Justice, Inc., The Army of Survivors, Darkness to Light, Champion Women, Together for Girls, BLOOM365, Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA),

According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) every 9 minutes a child is sexually abused in the United States—about 1 in 9 girls and 1 in 53 boys under 18 years old with over 93 percent of victims knowing their perpetrator.¹ With only 12 percent of child sexual abuse is reported to authorities each year,² studies have shown that underreporting of minor sexual abuse can be attributed in large part to the fact that a majority of child victims do not reveal their abuse until later in life.³ One study from the National Institutes of Health found that 60-80 percent of victims of childhood sexual abuse wait until adulthood to disclose their abuse.⁴

The Center for Disease Control has noted that these adverse childhood experiences (ACE) impact victim's short-term and long-term social and emotional development. Child sexual abuse victims are at increased risk of re-victimization and are at twice the risk of later in life intimate partner violence (IPV). Additionally, many victims experience devastating mental health challenges including depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and increased risk for suicide or suicide attempts.⁵

The federal criminal code does not impose a statute of limitations for child sexual abuse. However, in the majority of states, statutes of limitations deprive victims and survivors of child sexual abuse of the opportunity to heal and seek justice from their abusers. Only seven states—North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming—have eliminated statutes of limitations for all felony sex crimes.⁶

The **No Time Limit for Justice Act** would allow victims of child sexual abuse to seek justice and finally have their day in court. Specifically, the bill would provide states with a five percent increase in Federal grant funding under the Services, Training, Officers, Prosecution (STOP) program to help train law enforcement and prosecutors in addressing child sexual abuse. States are eligible for funding if they have:

- Eliminate the statute of limitations for prosecuting child sexual abuse
- Eliminate the statute of limitations civil suits involving child sexual abuse.

¹ <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence>

² https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_factsheet_media-packet_statistics-about-sexual-violence_0.pdf

³ <https://www.nsvrc.org/node/4737>

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2809444/>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/childsexualabuse.html>

⁶ <https://www.rainn.org/state-state-guide-statutes-limitations>

The STOP Grant is the largest program under the Office of Violence Against Women that provides formula funding to states for victim services, and training for law enforcement and prosecutors to constructively address sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.