

Chapter 656

(Senate Bill 505)

AN ACT concerning

Civil Actions – Child Sexual Abuse – Statute of Limitations and Required Findings

FOR the purpose of altering the statute of limitations in certain civil actions relating to child sexual abuse; establishing a statute of repose for certain civil actions relating to child sexual abuse; providing that, in a certain action filed more than a certain number of years after the victim reaches the age of majority, damages may be awarded against a person or governmental entity that is not an alleged perpetrator only under certain circumstances; providing that a certain action is exempt from certain provisions of the Local Government Torts Claims Act; providing that a certain action is exempt from certain provisions of the Maryland Torts Claims Act; defining a certain term; making certain stylistic changes; providing for the application of this Act; and generally relating to child sexual abuse.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings
Section 5–117 and 5–304(a)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2013 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings
Section 5–304(b)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2013 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – State Government
Section 12–106(a)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – State Government
Section 12–106(b)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings

5–117.

(a) **(1)** In this section, THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “ALLEGED PERPETRATOR” MEANS THE INDIVIDUAL ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED THE SPECIFIC INCIDENT OR INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE THAT SERVE AS THE BASIS OF AN ACTION UNDER THIS SECTION.

(3) ~~“sexual~~ “SEXUAL abuse” has the meaning stated in § 5–701 of the Family Law Article.

(b) An action for damages arising out of an alleged incident or incidents of sexual abuse that occurred while the victim was a minor shall be filed [within] ~~AGAINST THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR OF THE SEXUAL ABUSE:~~

(1) AT ANY TIME BEFORE THE VICTIM REACHES THE AGE OF MAJORITY; OR

(2) ~~WITHIN~~ SUBJECT TO SUBSECTIONS (C) AND (D) OF THIS SECTION, WITHIN THE LATER OF:

(I) [7] 20 years [of] AFTER the date that the victim [attains] REACHES the age of majority; OR

(II) 3 YEARS AFTER THE DATE THAT THE DEFENDANT IS CONVICTED OF A CRIME RELATING TO THE ALLEGED INCIDENT OR INCIDENTS UNDER:

1. § 3–602 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE; OR

2. THE LAWS OF ANOTHER STATE OR THE UNITED STATES THAT WOULD BE A CRIME UNDER § 3–602 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE.

~~(c) (1) AN ACTION FOR DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF AN ALLEGED INCIDENT OR INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE THAT OCCURRED WHILE THE VICTIM WAS A MINOR SHALL BE FILED AGAINST A PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY THAT IS NOT AN ALLEGED PERPETRATOR OF THE SEXUAL ABUSE:~~

~~(i) AT ANY TIME BEFORE THE VICTIM REACHES THE AGE OF MAJORITY; OR~~

~~(H) WITHIN 20 YEARS AFTER THE DATE THAT THE VICTIM REACHES THE AGE OF MAJORITY.~~

~~(2) IN AN ACTION BROUGHT UNDER THIS SUBSECTION, DAMAGES MAY BE AWARDED AGAINST A PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY ONLY ON A DETERMINATION BY THE FINDER OF FACT THAT THE PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY:~~

~~(i) PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT OR INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE THAT FORM THE BASIS OF THE ACTION, HAD ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE OF A PREVIOUS INCIDENT OR INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE; AND~~

~~(ii) NEGLIGENCE TO PREVENT THE INCIDENT OR INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE THAT FORM THE BASIS OF THE ACTION.~~

(C) IN AN ACTION BROUGHT UNDER THIS SECTION MORE THAN 7 YEARS AFTER THE VICTIM REACHES THE AGE OF MAJORITY, DAMAGES MAY BE AWARDED AGAINST A PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY THAT IS NOT THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR OF THE SEXUAL ABUSE ONLY IF:

(1) THE PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY OWED A DUTY OF CARE TO THE VICTIM;

(2) THE PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY EMPLOYED THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR OR EXERCISED SOME DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY OR CONTROL OVER THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR; AND

(3) THERE IS A FINDING OF GROSS NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF THE PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY.

(D) IN NO EVENT MAY AN ACTION FOR DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF AN ALLEGED INCIDENT OR INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE THAT OCCURRED WHILE THE VICTIM WAS A MINOR BE FILED AGAINST A PERSON OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY THAT IS NOT THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS AFTER THE DATE ON WHICH THE VICTIM REACHES THE AGE OF MAJORITY.

5-304.

(a) This section does not apply to an action [against]:

(1) AGAINST a nonprofit corporation described in § 5-301(d)(23), (24), (25), (26), (28), or (29) of this subtitle or its employees; OR

(2) BROUGHT UNDER § 5-117 OF THIS TITLE.

(b) (1) Except as provided in subsections (a) and (d) of this section, an action for unliquidated damages may not be brought against a local government or its employees unless the notice of the claim required by this section is given within 1 year after the injury.

(2) The notice shall be in writing and shall state the time, place, and cause of the injury.

Article – State Government

12–106.

(a) This section does not apply to a claim that is:

(1) asserted by cross–claim, counterclaim, or third–party claim; **OR**

(2) **BROUGHT UNDER § 5–117 OF THE COURTS ARTICLE.**

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, a claimant may not institute an action under this subtitle unless:

(1) the claimant submits a written claim to the Treasurer or a designee of the Treasurer within 1 year after the injury to person or property that is the basis of the claim;

(2) the Treasurer or designee denies the claim finally; and

(3) the action is filed within 3 years after the cause of action arises.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, ~~That this Act shall be construed to apply only prospectively and may not be applied or interpreted to have any effect on or application to any cause of action arising before the effective date of this Act~~ That this Act may not be construed to apply retroactively to revive any action that was barred by the application of the period of limitations applicable before October 1, 2017.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the statute of repose under § 5–117(d) of the Courts Article as enacted by Section 1 of this Act shall be construed to apply both prospectively and retroactively to provide repose to defendants regarding actions that were barred by the application of the period of limitations applicable before October 1, 2017.

SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2017.

Approved by the Governor, May 25, 2017.