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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for HB0974

Judiciary Committee

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Madame Vice-Chairwoman, and distinguished members of the committee. I am Delegate C.T. Wilson and it's a privilege to be here to present **House Bill 0974 entitled Civil Actions-Child Sexual Abuse-Definition and Statute of Limitations (Hidden Predator Act of 2020)**.

Bill Overview:

Altering the definition of "sexual abuse" and the statute of limitations in certain civil actions relating to child sexual abuse providing that a certain action may be filed at any time; and providing for the retroactive application of the Act to revive any action that was barred by the application of the period of limitations applicable before October 1, 2020, if the action is filed before October 1, 2022; and repealing a statute of repose for certain civil actions relating to child sexual abuse.

Bill Outline:

1. Altering the definition of sexual abuse as stated in § 5-701 in the Family Law Article: "Sexual molestation or exploitation of a child or sex trafficking of a child by any individual"
2. An action for damages arising out of an alleged incident(s) of sexual abuse that occurred while the victim was a minor may be filed at any time.
3. Once in effect, cannot be applied retroactively to revive any case barred by prior statutes of limitation prior to the effect date.

Conclusion: This bill will allow victims of child sexual abuse, many of whom suffer long-term emotional and psychological effects, the opportunity to seek damages from their abuser; adding Maryland to the list of states recognizing the need for abolishing the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse.

Thank you for your time and I request favorable consideration for this bill. I am open to any questions or concerns you may have about **HB0964**.