

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0001
Civil Actions – Child Sexual Abuse – Definition, Damages, and Statute of Limitations
(The Child Victims Act of 2023)
****SUPPORT****

To: Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair, and Members of the House Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Teresa F. Lancaster

Date: March 2, 2023

GOOD AFTERNOON MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE, my name is Teresa Lancaster. I am an Attorney, survivor, activist, and advocate for victims of childhood sexual abuse. I come here every year to speak for 100s of survivors who have not yet found their voice.

I was abused in 1970-72 at Archbishop Keough High School by the counselor there, Father A. Joseph Maskell. You may know me from The Keepers documentary which exposed a powerful sex abuse ring at Keough.

I was unable to come forward about my abuse in the 1970's because Maskell convinced me I would not be believed, and he threatened me with his gun. **I FEARED FOR MY LIFE.**

This is common among survivors. Why? The severe nature of the trauma endured coupled with the often-high social position of the abusers are factors that prevent survivors from coming forward earlier. Other factors are depression & substance abuse.

I struggled with the fact that my abuser was someone I trusted. A Catholic priest.

Father Maskell was assigned powerful positions by the AOB. He was a police chaplain as well as a military chaplain for young recruits. He always had access to young victims. Through my work helping other survivors, I learned that Maskell abused kids as young as 3 years of age.

Cardinal Keeler knew my 1994 Doe/Roe case was credible but used the Statute of Limitations (SOL) to make it go away. As a direct result Maskell was given free rein to continue abusing children. The Catholic Church has a long history of hiding their pedophile priests and shipping them from parish to parish

This Bill will:

1. Provide a path to justice for victims ready to come forward.
2. Help Identify Hidden Predators, and
3. Disclose facts of the sex abuse epidemic to the public.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable committee report and passage of House Bill 0001, The Child Victims Act of 2023