

SENATE BILL 693

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By: **Senator Smith**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Civil Actions – Child Sexual Abuse – Repeal of Limitations on Attorney’s Fees**

3 FOR the purpose of repealing certain limitations on fees attorneys may charge or receive
4 in certain civil actions for child sexual abuse; applying this Act retroactively; and
5 generally relating to civil actions for child sexual abuse.

6 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
7 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings
8 Section 5–117
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

13 **Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

14 5–117.

15 (a) In this section, “sexual abuse” means any act that involves:

16 (1) An adult allowing or encouraging a child to engage in:

17 (i) Obscene photography, films, poses, or similar activity;

18 (ii) Pornographic photography, films, poses, or similar activity; or

19 (iii) Prostitution;

20 (2) Incest;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(3) Rape;

(4) Sexual offense in any degree; or

(5) Any other sexual conduct that is a crime.

(b) Except as provided under subsection (d) of this section and notwithstanding any time limitation under a statute of limitations, a statute of repose, the Maryland Tort Claims Act, the Local Government Tort Claims Act, or any other law, an action for damages arising out of a claim or claims of sexual abuse that occurred while the victim was a minor may be filed at any time.

(c) Except as provided in §§ 5–303 and 5–518 of this title and § 12–104 of the State Government Article, the total amount of noneconomic damages that may be awarded under this section to a single claimant in an action against a single defendant for injuries arising from a claim or claims that would have been barred by a time limitation before October 1, 2023, may not exceed:

(1) For an action filed on or before May 31, 2025, \$1,500,000; and

(2) For an action filed on or after June 1, 2025, \$700,000.

(d) No action for damages that would have been barred by a time limitation before October 1, 2023, may be brought under this section if the alleged victim of abuse is deceased at the commencement of the action.

[(e) In any action for damages filed on or after June 1, 2025, arising out of a claim or claims of sexual abuse that occurred while the claimant was a minor, counsel may not charge or receive fees that exceed:

(1) 20% of the settlement; or

(2) 25% of the judgment.]

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall be construed to apply retroactively and shall be applied to and interpreted to affect any action for damages arising out of a claim or claims of sexual abuse that occurred while the claimant was a minor filed on or after June 1, 2025.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That a presently existing obligation or contract right may not be impaired in any way by this Act.

SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2026.