

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 134:
CIVIL ACTIONS – CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE – DEFINITION AND STATUTE OF
LIMITATIONS
SUPPORT**

**TO: Hon. Chairman William C. Smith, Hon. Vice Chair Jeff Waldstreicher, Senate
Judicial Proceedings Committee**

FROM: Erin Lorenz

DATE: 02/02/2021

It has been nearly 19 Easters since Theodore then-Cardinal McCarrick went on *Meet the Press* and assured the good people of the Archdiocese of Washington that nothing was wrong, that these cases of abuse so thoroughly reported by the Boston Globe were all in the past and that all would be well. Nearly 19 Easters since my father dredged up the trauma of his own past, which remained very much his present, to tell us, his children, that the Cardinal was quite wrong. This was to say nothing of the egregious offenses that the Cardinal himself had committed that would come to light years later.

It has been nearly 15 general assembly sessions since I first attempted to testify to this body on behalf of this bill, only to be thwarted by legislators other than yourselves whose allegiance to Catholicism's coffers meant that this bill remained buried for over a decade. In short, it has been too long. It is far past time for survivors of childhood sexual assault to have sufficient legal recourse in order to seek justice and healing for themselves.

As a teacher, I am a mandatory reporter. Every year, I learn the signs of abuse and the correct reports to file. But what I have also learned is that young people are excellent at burying that which they want no one to see. Developmentally, they are only just beginning to understand their role in the world as an individual human, and what it means to have a moral compass. The statistics we have heard today tell me that more than one in 5 of my current students has been assaulted by an adult. Out of 120 students, that's 30 kids - an entire class section's worth. I tell you now that I have no idea who they are. They are hiding it right now, because their brains cannot handle what has happened to them. And in our current situation, many of these children are sadly more at risk without their

school building as a refuge. As someone who is witness to the trauma in an adult survivor, and as a teacher who cares deeply about her students, it disturbs me to think that my students might be living in a world that will not protect them and instead protect their predators.

Since I do not know who they are, I cannot help these students directly. But I can ask on their behalf that the state of Maryland end the statute of limitations, and let them have a chance at a future. Thank you. ***For these reasons, I urge a favorable committee report and passage of Senate Bill 134 without amendment.***