

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: Anonymous

DATE: 02/02/2021

I am testifying today in support of The Hidden Predators Act (HB263 and SB134.)

I am 53 years old and my life has been extremely difficult. I can only provide this testimony anonymously and I thank you for this opportunity.

I experienced my abuse between the ages of 8-16. I have only told three people about my abuse; my therapist, a support group leader and his wife. (with small bits to the rest of the support group.) I cannot share the details of my experience in this testimony, fearful of it becoming a public written record. I'm a mess. I could be your grown child, your aunt, your niece, your cousin, your friend. But I am alone – a loneliness experienced by countless victims of child sex abuse.

At 16, I attempted suicide and was hospitalized for one month. After discharge I spent weekends with one of those nurses on staff who took me in for safety reasons. In response to my trauma, I began suffering from an eating disorder during my teenage years. Keeping the abuse a secret was my primary goal because my perpetrator promised to harm my parents or siblings if I mentioned any word about it. What recourse does a child have in this scenario? Therapeutics for the eating disorder were not successful and I fell into an abyss of anxiety and depression. My behavior was not understood by family members and I felt rejected by them. I was unable to deal with the constant criticism of my weight, inability to hold down a job, and lack of social interaction.

I had several admissions to the Center for Eating Disorders costing \$50,000 for a 3-4 week stay. I subsequently had ten in-patient stays. I was an out-patient there for ten years accruing well over one million dollars in bills. I have received on and off psychiatric therapy and spent three or four stays at psych units between 2005-2006 and again in 2018 and 2019 at \$175,000 each time.

Along with emotional and psychological trauma, I also suffered painful physical affects from the abuse which I cannot even write about. I've never had a boyfriend and fear never getting married because I'm too afraid to get physically close to men. I suffer from debilitating depression unable to get out of bed too many days. The best type of housing I can afford is a former motel building which is filled with drug users. One thing I have been able to avoid is involvement with drugs and alcohol. I am too embarrassed to give anyone my address. As bills pile up my ability to function declines.

I have a B.A. degree in Accounting and a nursing certificate but my emotional struggles cause an inability to concentrate which leaves me unable to hold down full-time employment. My spiritual life suffers as well due to my abuser being the trusted priest in my parish and family friend. I have a fear of churches, unresolved anger at God and self-hatred.

My finances:

Amount	Yearly out of pocket
\$5,200	Mental Health Counseling
\$1,000	Doctor appointments: Diabetes, Hypertension, High Cholesterol, associated with Eating Disorder
\$5,000	Prescriptions

Recent years:

\$50,000	Hospitalization for Debilitating depression due to trauma, PTSD, Eating Disorder
\$35,000	Credit card debt
\$100,000	Approximate lost wages

What I need from you is at least the opportunity to get justice for what happened to me – an innocent child sexually abused by a priest; an adult who should have been my spiritual leader. I need at least the opportunity to seek compensation so I can try to help pay my bills and get the help and support that I need. The children being abused right now need your help. The people covering up these abuses need to be held accountable. Children who have yet been harmed need help. The Hidden Predators Act will provide a portion of the help needed. It will expose predators thus saving some children from harm. It will give an opportunity for victims to be compensated thus providing them with funds for counseling, job training, basic needs like food, housing and medical care. It will hold people and institutions accountable for their part in perpetrating or covering up instances of child sex abuse.

Please help me and so many others like me. It is way past time for Maryland to do the right thing to protect our children now and in the future. Pass the Hidden Predators Act. ***For these reasons, I urge a favorable committee report and passage of Senate Bill 134 without amendment.***