

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: 01/04/2021

I grew up in Annapolis 30 years ago and am a survivor of child sexual abuse. I wish to start by thanking the committee for allowing anonymous testimony today. Otherwise I wouldn't have the courage to speak. I can be reached at the email address at the bottom of the following page if needed.

From age 6-9, I was **sexually abused by my pediatrician**. Whenever I saw him, whether it was for an earache or an annual physical, he always insisted on examining my genitalia with his bare hands. He also prescribed a hormonal cream for me for the duration of the three years, a cream that is usually only used on adult women, which caused early puberty development and also required daily genital touching by a parent.

Eventually, at age 9, my parents took me for a second opinion about the way that doctor was treating me. I told that new pediatrician at my first appointment what had happened with the previous doctor. He said I did not require touching any genitalia, and referred me to a therapist. He never reported to police, and neither did the therapist he referred me to, or my parents. None of these adults ever brought it up with me again.

Today, I live with diagnoses of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, Anxiety Disorder and Panic Disorder, all as a result of the abuse I experienced as a child. I've spent at least **\$76,000** out-of-pocket on therapy, psychiatric medications, and other mental health treatment including multiple inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations for suicide attempts.

I reported both of the pediatricians to police in 2019. As far as I can tell, nothing has come of their investigation.

I learned recently that during the careers of both these pediatricians, there were other patients, parents, and medical professionals who also complained about them. But I've been told that there is no procedure for telling a doctor to stop practicing. So both of my pediatricians retired at a ripe old age, 15-20 years after I last saw them. I've been told they were both "grandfathered in" for their last decades in business, and didn't have to be fellows of the American Board of Pediatrics or show continuing education to practice.

I've also learned recently that the second pediatrician, the one to whom I reported my abuse, was on the Board of Trustees at my school. I went to **The Key School**, which — I'm sure you'll hear about from other survivors today — is now known to have covered up decades of child

sexual abuse by teachers. In fact, both of my pediatricians came recommended by people at Key. The second pediatrician was also a board member when several Key survivors first approached the school to report what teachers had done to them in the 1970s and 1980s. No one reported those teachers when that happened, including the pediatrician. So I wasn't the only child who that board member heard was being abused and failed to take action to protect — despite it being his professional duty to do so.

Furthermore, I learned recently that before being elected to the Board, that doctor was also the pediatrician of some of Key's survivors — while their teachers were abusing them. He did not report those teachers at that time, despite them abusing his patients. Then later, he was elected to the board of the same institution that harbored those patients' abusers.

Both pediatricians are still well-respected members of the Annapolis community, and the second is still well-loved within the Key community due to his service on the board. They both retired in financial comfort and now live in nice homes in and around Annapolis.

By contrast, I am unable to work due to mental health issues that resulted from my abuse as a child. I'm on **Social Security Disability** (SSDI), which is funded by our tax dollars and I'm only middle-aged.

Prior to going on SSDI, I worked for about 23 years. During that time, I missed at least one full day of work per week for mental health issues as a result of being abused as a child. I estimate that the income I lost during those 23 years because of missing work due to my childhood abuse was at least **\$84,408**. Now that my disabilities completely prevent me from working, I've lost still more income.

As much as we want to believe that the institutions to which we entrust our children are doing the right thing and protecting them, that's not always the case. I've been betrayed by two different pediatric offices, my school, my therapists, a couple of Maryland journalists who I asked for help, and the criminal justice system. In addition, the impact — both financial and emotional — on me in the wake of my abuse and betrayal by the institutions charged with protecting me has been enormous.

I submitted testimony for the Hidden Predator Act in 2020, so when the COVID-19 pandemic prevented voting on it, I was devastated. The pandemic has been especially hard because I live alone, and typically count on in-person communities for support. I don't even have coworkers, so the pandemic has been especially isolating. I've lost a lot of ground this year that I'd fought long and hard for, with my mental health, and spent way more this year on treatment (\$8,565) than previous years. Please don't delay passage of this bill again — my depression cannot handle it.

I urge lawmakers to please do the right thing and help protect the citizens who are least able to protect ourselves, by passing Senate Bill 134. It's time to shift the burden away from victims, and onto the perpetrators and the institutions that keep perpetrators safe. ***For these reasons, I urge a favorable committee report and passage of Senate Bill 134 without amendment.***

Thank you for your time and attention. My email address is fogoisland@protonmail.com.

