



Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB134: Civil Actions-Child Sexual Abuse-Definitions and Statutes of Limitations
Hidden Predator Act
Support
February 2, 2021

The Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) is a federally mandated citizen review panel consisting of over 150 Governor appointed volunteers representing the 23 counties and Baltimore City. CRBC is charged with examining the policies, practices and procedures of Maryland's child protective services and making recommendations for systemic improvement. CRBC promotes safety and well-being for children and envisions the protection of all children from abuse and neglect; children only being placed in out-of-home placement when necessary; providing families with the help that they need to stay intact.

CRBC supports SB134: Hidden Predator Act because it would allow victims of sexual abuse to have justice, expose hidden predators and protect others from future abuse. This bill removes exemptions that protect individuals and organizations instead of survivors of sexual abuse.

Nationally, there is increasingly more effort on exposing hidden predators through civil statute of limitations and lookback windows. Approximately 1/3 of the states have passed legislation since 2018 extending the civil statute of limitations and allowing for a lookback period for child sex abuse. This includes the introduction of this legislation in Maryland in 2020.

The statute of limitations in Maryland for childhood sexual abuse ends more than 10 years after the average age a victim of childhood sexual abuse discloses which is well into adulthood. This bill would educate the public, increase awareness of the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse so that families and legal systems could prevent future sexual abuse. The effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and trauma from childhood sexual abuse are poor long term mental and physical health, educational and employment outcomes that is costly to individuals and the State.

For these reasons we urge a favorable committee report on SB134: Hidden Predator Act. Thank you.