

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 686
Civil Actions – Child Sexual Abuse – Definition, Damages, and Statute of Limitations
(The Child Victims Act of 2023)

****SUPPORT****

TO: Hon. William C. Smith, Jr. Chair, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Megan Stone Venton

DATE: February 23, 2023

I strongly support SB 686. I'm not going to talk about what happened to me. It's degrading to talk about it again. It's a matter of record: Washington Post August 19, 2018.

I will say that when I told my guidance counselor about this perpetrator, when he was trying to determine why I seemed to be psychologically and academically crashing, his reply was "I know, baby; I've got eyes." Dozens of perpetrators, dozens of victims were involved at this school. Only one person was fired to my knowledge, and it was done quietly.

I will say that what happened to me has had a profound influence on my life; on my relationships, decision-making, emotional and physical health, and my ability to trust anyone to not be a predator. I have to work every day to minimize its' impact, with many hours of cognitive therapy; and I am coming up on being a senior citizen.

It's tremendously difficult and frightening to report sexual abuse, at any age; but when one is somewhat older, one has a better chance of withstanding the tremendous emotional fallout; the horror, pity, disgust, isolation; the excruciating feeling of exposure.

Please help us shift the burden of this sort of damage off of the taxpayer and rightfully onto the shoulders of the institutions that used us with such impunity.

Let's also expand the threat against future pedophiles and the institutions that shelter them.

Let's save some lives.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 686.

