

**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: Gloria Larkin, Survivor**  
**DATE: March 24, 2023**

I am Gloria Larkin, resident of Howard County, Maryland for over 45 years. I am imploring you to eliminate the statute of limitation on reporting the heinous crime of child sexual abuse. When a child is abused whether once or repeatedly, it is impossible for her to know that the abuse is illegal and that she should report it. She is a child, dependent upon adults to protect and care for her. Often it is exactly those adults who are the abusers. In fact her entire childhood is destroyed because she has no one to confide in, to trust, to report to.

That child only knows she has been harmed, and often the only way to survive is to pretend she is OK, to create a survival mentality, even if the abuse continues for a long period of time. With no one to trust, no safe place, no understanding of law and her own rights, she is truly voiceless.

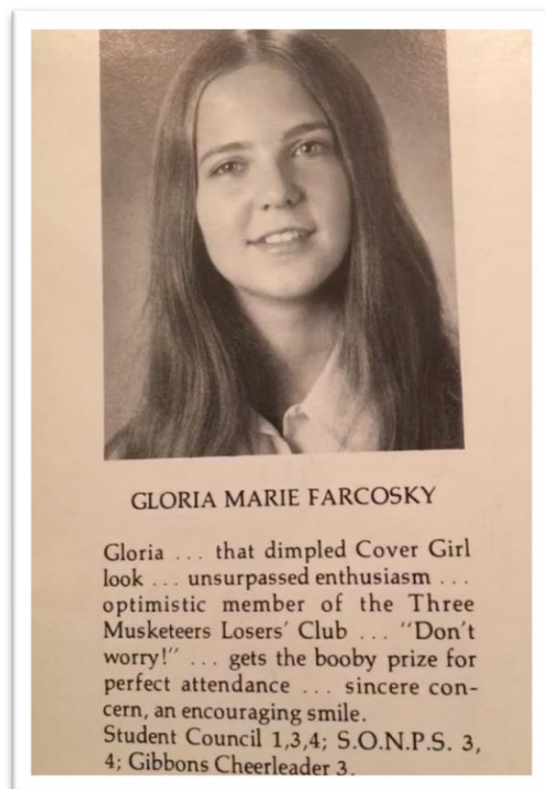
Medical science has proven that the human brain survives extraordinary trauma by shielding the person from the memory of abuse, at least initially. However, post-traumatic stress disorder is often the result.

For those that experience sexual abuse as a child, they become experts at survival, only focusing on the now and future, seeming to thrive, but when in reality, the past sexual abuse becomes a cancer that causes personal misery and dysfunction.

Some victims cannot exist with the pain, they kill themselves. Others struggle in every aspect of their life, turn to alcohol, to drugs, to risky behavior to mask the pain of childhood sexual abuse. Until the day when it is no longer possible to hide the abuse, when it is necessary to, as an adult, to acknowledge the root cause of the pain and name the abuser, name the abuser, living or dead.

And finally, realize, that it was not our fault, it was 100% the fault and responsibility of the abuser.

I know this because I am a survivor. The crime committed against me was the emotional, psychological and sexual abuse by my trusted counselors and protectors, Fr Maskell and Fr Magnus



and a police officer, while I was a student at the Catholic Archbishop Keough High School, in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Maryland, from the Fall of 1970 into Spring 1972, when I graduated.

Now is the time for you to act responsibly to protect all children from today forward by repealing the unreasonable statute of limitations previously purchased by the lobbying efforts of the catholic church. And to add a "look back" window to allow all existing survivors to have their voice heard no matter how long ago the abuse occurred or what individual or organization was involved. And alter the definition of "sexual abuse" for purposes relating to civil actions for child sexual abuse to include any act that involves an adult allowing or encouraging a child to engage in certain activities; repealing a statute of repose for certain civil actions relating to child sexual abuse; and providing for the retroactive application of the Act under certain circumstances and other details provided in the legislation.

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