

LATE Testimony

TO: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Jo Jordan, Vice Chair
Human Services Committee Members

FROM: Child Sex Abuse Survivor through proxy Dara Carlin, M.A.
881 Akiu Place
Kailua, HI 96734

DATE: January 30, 2012

Re: Strong Support for **HB2139 and HB1933**, Relating To Statutes of Limitations

Honorable Representatives,

I apologize for this by proxy testimony but having the courage to speak the truth is very tough because you fear what the outcome is going to look like. I don't feel strong enough yet to stand before you but do feel strongly enough about this bill to present my testimony if only to send Ms. Carlin forward to be my representative. I'm not HAPPY AT ALL having to hang my dirty laundry out in public like this but this is that important to me and I know other victims would agree...

What happened at Penn State recently is a perfect example of why we need HB2139 and HB1933. If you noticed the victims' disclosures about their abuse came out way later, YEARS later, then it actually happened and after one victim stepped forward so did another and another and another. I would like to see the whole statute of limitations eliminated all together and to ask to be able to take actions against a perpetrator that was not quite an adult (say 15- 17 not yet an adult but should have known better) when the crime took place.

Child sexual abuse and incest are silent crimes that are HUMILATING, DEGRADING, AND INTIMIDATING for the victims (things that I'm feeling right now as I'm writing this) and it's made all the worse when the abuser is someone from your own family.

I am also angry, enraged really, about the fact that I have to DEFEND why we need this bill that should already exist. Because this bill has not been put into law, my abuser has been able to get away with all he's done to me and he knows he's untouchable! Can you imagine how that feels!?

As a victim I had a mother who didn't care and who lead me to believe (and later told me) that the sexual abuse was my fault. I didn't know if my father knew about it but I feared that speaking up would have ruined his reputation since he was very well known and loved in the community. I also loved my father and didn't want to hurt him with the truth so I accepted and lived with the attitude that "it was my fault". I've struggled my entire life with the consequences of my silence and abuse until the day my abuser moved in next door to me and then suddenly it all came back. It was like a sleeping

dragon. I became mad at everything, had nightmares every night and decades after the abuse, I was recommended to psychologists. They tried their best to "change my mindset" that was "conflicting with my reality" but no matter how hard I tried, it wasn't working for me and I only developed more symptoms. The symptoms then became physical and after my father passed, I finally "broke my silence" but doing so cost me my whole family. When I protested my abuser's proximity to me, I was told I have no recourse and this is the anger that's given me the strength to speak out.

I believe we as a community are sending way too many mixed messages as to whether incest and sexual abuse are crimes or not. There should be some kind of fairness or justice for victims. It's extremely embarrassing to the victim when others don't take this crime SERIOUSLY and it's made worse by judgmental glares and stares, people questioning my sanity when they should be questioning my abuser, and having no recourse for crimes committed against me.

Please don't let what's happened to me happen to any other victim of child sexual abuse. Give victims the option for justice when they're ready to ask for it, don't leave abusers with the power to wag a statute of limitations in a victim's face as they're able to do now.