



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## AT CAPITOL RALLY, SENATOR BRAD HOYLMAN & DEMOCRATIC LEADER ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS RENEW FIGHT FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL January 4, 2017



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ALBANY – At a rally today outside the Senate chambers, before the start of the 2017 Legislative Session, State Senator Brad Hoylman (D, WFP-Manhattan), Senate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D, WFP-Yonkers) and Democratic Senate colleagues announced their renewed legislative effort to bring justice to the survivors of childhood sexual abuse by reforming New York State's outdated statutes of limitations. The Democratic Senators were joined by Member of the Assembly Linda B. Rosenthal (D, WFP-Manhattan).

Hoylman's and Stewart-Cousins' bill, the Child Victims Act, would lift New York's civil and criminal statutes of limitations for child sexual abuse crimes, which currently are the most restrictive in the nation, and create a one-year look-back period to allow survivors the opportunity to file claims against abusers who remain at-large.

Currently, New York's statutes of limitations only give survivors until the age of 23 to file criminal charges or initiate a civil lawsuit. For most, this is an insufficient amount of time to come to terms with their trauma, escape the reach of abusers, or even publicly acknowledge their abuse. As a result, by the time many of these survivors come forward as adults to report the crimes it's too late to take action.

Hoylman and Stewart-Cousins introduced a new version of the Child Victims Act last year that treats public and private institutions equally, thereby dispatching claims that religious groups were being unfairly targeted, winning the support of the group of breakaway Democrats known as the Independent Democratic Conference. Nevertheless, a procedural vote to demonstrate support for the Child Victims Act was thwarted by Senate Republicans, failing by one vote.

**State Senator Brad Hoylman** said: "There is a fierce urgency to act now. The longer Albany waits to address New York's archaic statutes of limitations, the more children will be abused

by sexual predators - up to 43,000 this year according to estimates. Our Child Victims Act is the only bill that would accomplish the twin goals of reforming the statutes of limitations for the deplorable crimes of child sexual abuse and give survivors a chance to confront their abusers in court. I'm thrilled to partner with Democratic Leader Stewart-Cousins and our colleagues to carry on this paramount fight for justice."

In October, the Archdiocese of New York announced the creation of a compensation fund for individuals who were sexually abused as minors by clergy members working for the Archdiocese. Survivors who receive compensation through the program are required to execute a full release of liability and waive their right to sue any party relating to the alleged sexual abuse.

**Senator Hoylman continued:** "The Archdiocese's victim's compensation fund is proof of concept for the need for the Child Victims Act. It is recognition of the extensiveness of the problem and Albany's unwillingness to thus far address it."

**Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said: "It's shameful that we are entering another Legislative Session having to fight for passage of the Child Victims Act. The single reason for this is that the Senate Republicans continue block this measure and refuse to support justice for the victims of these heinous crimes. I urge the Senate Republicans to stop playing politics and join with their Democratic colleagues to finally pass this bill into law. The victims of child sex abuse deserve justice, and the Senate Democrats will keep up the fight to ensure they receive it."

"The upcoming 2017 session will be marked by new challenges; passing the Child Victims Act should not be one of them," said **Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal** (D/WF-Manhattan), who has become a leading voice in the Assembly for passing reform. "This balanced measure is not only restorative for survivors of childhood sexual assault, but will also protect countless children against sexual predators who today are walking our streets free, insulated against

punishment and the reach of justice. We have a responsibility to every single parent to do everything in our power to protect their children against sexual assault."