



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Senate Democrats Stand Up For Survivors, Demand Passage Of Child Victims Act

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS February 27, 2018

| ISSUE: **CHILD VICTIMS ACT, VICTIMS**



(Albany, NY) The Senate Democratic Conference today demanded that the Child Victims Act be passed into law this Legislative Session, ideally within the 2018-2019 State Budget. Currently, the Child Victims Act is included in Governor Cuomo's budget proposals, and Senate Democrats urged the Senate Republican Majority to not negotiate it out of the final, enacted State Budget. The Child Victims Act has the support of Governor Cuomo, the Senate Democratic Conference, and the Assembly Democratic Majority, and has only been blocked

from taking effect by the Senate Republican Majority.

“The Senate Republicans have blocked this important bill for too long. Now is the moment to get this done and we cannot miss this crucial opportunity to provide justice to so many brave survivors,” **Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. “To remove this bill from the budget or water it down would be a disservice to New York. I applaud Senator Brad Hoylman for leading the fight on this issue in the State Senate, and am proud that my fellow Senate Democrats support this important legislation.”

According to the [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#), one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused by the time they turn 18, and nearly three-quarters of all reported sexual assault victims are children. Additionally, reports have revealed that 73% of child victims do not tell anyone for at least a year and 45% of child abuse victims do not tell anyone for at least five years. By the time that victims recognize that they have been abused and are able to tell someone about it, in a large number of cases the statute of limitations has already expired. To address these concerns, and to help the survivors of this crime seek justice, Senator Brad Hoylman has led the fight in the Senate to pass the Child Victims Act.

**Bill Sponsor, Senator Brad Hoylman** said, “Protecting children from predators should not be controversial or political and for the vast majority of New Yorkers, it isn't. In fact, according to a recent poll by Quinnipiac University, 90 percent of registered voters support the Child Victims Act. It's time for Republicans in Albany to listen to the will of their voters. Working with Senate Democratic Leader Stewart-Cousins as well as survivors and advocates, we're making it clear that justice is non-negotiable by including the Child Victims Act in the final budget.”

When passed into law, the Child Victims Act will raise the criminal statute of limitations for several child sexual abuse crimes to age 28, and raise the civil statute of limitations for causes

of action brought by someone seeking redress for physical, psychological or other injury caused by child sexual abuse to age 50. Additionally, this legislation will create a one year window, starting six months from the effective date of the bill, for past victims of child sexual abuse to initiate lawsuits against their abusers, and create parity in how regulations impact public and private institutions under these circumstances.

The Senate Democrats also issued a report detailing outlining the need to pass the Child Victims Act immediately. The full report is available here:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/372470542/Senate-Democrats-Stand-Up-For-Survivors-Demand-Passage-of-Child-Victims-Act>

**Senate Democratic Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris** said, “Our laws are meant to deliver justice and silencing the most vulnerable victims does not speak to a fair and just system. The Senate must pass the Child Victims Act this year and support those who have been silenced for too long.”

**Senator Jamaal Bailey** said, “The passage of the Child Victims Act is crucial for the thousands of New Yorkers that are survivors of child sexual abuse. It is never easy for a child to speak about their abuse, especially at a young age. Raising the statute of limitations is necessary in order for victims of child sexual abuse to be able to seek and have the justice they deserve. I want to thank Senator Hoylman and the conference for their fight to have this passed.”

**Senator John E. Brooks** said, “There is no greater responsibility that we have than to protect our children. Predators continue to kill the souls of defenseless young girls and boys while some in Albany refuse to act. It is unfathomable that anyone can still be obstructing the immediate passage of the Child Victims Act. I ask anyone to look into the eyes and listen to the grief and trauma experienced by victim-survivors of childhood sexual abuse, and then continue to deny them justice.”

**Senator Tim Kennedy** said, “A national dialogue is underway, with countless survivors coming forward to share their stories of sexual abuse and harassment. It’s heartbreaking to hear, and it’s devastating to know so many of these people felt silenced out of fear for so many years. But experts say this pattern of trauma – and the lack of reporting it - is all too common. Under current New York State law, we’re not only failing to give child sexual abuse victims the time they need to process and grieve this unimaginable offense, but we’re allowing abusers the opportunity to commit these tragic acts again. Enough is enough. It’s time we as a state put politics aside and put the safety and best interests of our children first.”

**Senator Liz Krueger** said, “Protecting our children from sexual abuse is one of our basic responsibilities, but for years we have shirked that responsibility by failing to pass the Child Victims Act. This is a commonsense bill that is supported by the vast majority of New Yorkers. Passing this bill is simply the right thing to do, and it is time for the Senate Majority Coalition to step up or get out of the way.”

**Senator Gustavo Rivera** said, “It is despicable that survivors of sexual abuse have been denied the ability to hold their abusers accountable. I stand firmly with my colleagues in the Democratic Conference in demanding that the Child Victims Act be included in this year's budget. We cannot continue to allow the law of our state to protect sexual predators from being held responsible for their actions and we have an obligation to support and empower those New Yorkers who have been sexually abused to seek justice.”

**Senator Toby Ann Stavisky** said, “The physical and psychological toll sexual abuse has on a child is long lasting and often continues into adulthood. Many victims blame themselves, repress memories or feel embarrassed to come forward right away. While these individuals reckon with the senseless act committed against them, it is unfair to demand they report these crimes by the time they are 21 years old; barely out of adolescence. It is time we stand up for what is right and pass the Child Victim's Act.”

**Marci Hamilton, CEO and Academic Director of CHILD USA and co-founder of New Yorkers Against Hidden Predators**, said, "New York is among the worst states in the country for victims of child sexual abuse, but this is the year to finally change that by passing the Child Victims Act. With the inclusion of the CVA in the executive budget and a national movement demanding accountability for sexual abuse, we have never been closer to achieving justice and stopping hidden predators across our state. We are grateful for the unwavering support for this bill from Senator Hoylman and the Senate Democratic Conference, and it's time for the Senate Republicans to stop their obstruction and finally allow a vote."

**Stephen Jimenez, co-founder of New Yorkers Against Hidden Predators**, said, "It's time for Senate Republicans to stop protecting sexual predators and finally stand with victims who deserve justice. With 90% of New Yorkers supporting the Child Victims Act, the case for reforming our outdated laws has never been more clear. New Yorkers are demanding accountability for these crimes, and we won't tolerate inaction any longer."

**Kat Sullivan, Survivor and Activist**, said, "My name is Kat Sullivan and I was raped in 1998 at the Emma Willard School by a man who was my history professor as well as my soccer coach. When I reported my rape to the school they told me that they had "no civil or criminal liability" because the statute of limitations had expired. They didn't feel obligated to face what they had done until I took my case to the media. With massive alumni and public pressure to do so, the school threw some money at me in a mediated settlement. I still don't have legal recourse. But this isn't just about me. After I came forward, thousands of alumni gathered online and over 800 signed a letter asking that the school investigate. Senator Gillibrand, a noted alumni, made a public statement demanding an independent investigation be done. The school hired a law firm to review the school's history and found more cases of abuse. This is why survivors need the Child Victims Act, to grant them access to due process. We need to know who hurt children. We need to know how they were able to do it. We need to know who helped keep the sexual assaults and molestations a secret. We

need to know how many more victims they had. We need to know because we need to prevent more abuse.”

**Joanne Yepsen, Former Saratoga Springs Mayor**, said, “The passage of the NYS Child Victims Act is way overdue. As former Mayor and leader of my community I have seen first-hand the negative personal and professional impacts of the NOT passing this bill on numerous individuals and their families. Stop the bleeding. Get it done now.”