

Chair Barker, members of the Committee, I'm here today doing the scariest thing I've ever had to do because I know it will open the door to intense attacks from my abuser, but that's something most victims are already too familiar with. I'm here because there is a great need in Oregon to redefine the way we manage sex offenders. My case is indicative of how far behind the curve Oregon has fallen when it comes to protecting minor victims of sex abuse.

Right now we are behind only Indiana when it comes to the statute of limitations. Do we really want anything in common with Indiana right now? It's embarrassing. Honestly, it's a national embarrassment. I would say to anyone who is against meaningful statute of limitations reform to just step back, be quiet, you're on the wrong side of history and human rights so please just stop. I understand just from the numbers that sex offenders have become a powerful voting block, but thanks to these people still being out on the streets, the number of voters who are victims is even bigger. That's nothing to brag about. That's horrible.

I'm so proud to be an Oregonian though. I love how involved we are in causes close to our hearts. So I'm excited to see what each of you will be getting DONE in the realm of Public Safety in the near future. I've started watching you all very closely, and I am very interested in the legislative process, and I've seen what you all can get done when you work together and when you really, personally want to get something accomplished. I believe wholeheartedly that the climate we're in right now is perfect for making progress toward victim-minded legislation if someone so chooses. I sincerely hope you leave this hearing knowing that you have a huge burden on your shoulders, but I'm pretty sure you know that that is just part of the job you signed on for. You have a job, and your job is to use wisdom and experience to find a way to hand down a better future for our children.

Before anyone makes a crack about the old fashioned people who are always going on and on about "protecting the babies", I can't help but picture in my head the depiction of Nancy Grace on Saturday Night Live and wonder if that's how some people, in some circles, mock those who actually do dedicate their lives to protecting others. As if an outdated Puritanical view is the problem.

The problem right now, the most statistically shocking problem, just looking at the numbers it's obvious that the most pressing problem we have right now is sexual violence and the fact that only 2% of rapists will ever spend a day behind bars.

I think the reason I have the courage to even sit here today is because of how encouraged I've been by so many people down here at the capitol that work tirelessly for a good cause and who dedicate their lives and resources to protecting the vulnerable. I'm so inspired by the fight of others that I'm here to lend whatever voice I have to get justice.

The problem is systemic, it needs an overhaul. We need creative team efforts to come up with a solution. Don't be overwhelmed by the details right now, just imagine for a moment that the system is fair for everybody and then work towards making that happen.

I hope you are informed enough at this point to realize that you cannot be simultaneously lax on sex offenders and harsh and unfair to victims without causing a huge imbalance. It is our laws, like the

statute of limitations on sex crimes, that have *created* the "rape culture", and it has robbed countless victims of justice and protection. This thriving culture of protecting the offender as if they are the real victim does nothing for the interests of Public Safety. In my case, if someone would have investigated my claims back in 1997, before the statute of limitations expired, perhaps my abuser's next victim would not be scarred from head to toe from the knife attack she endured while also being held against her will and brutally raped, choked, beaten and stabbed.

I don't feel this bill goes far enough to address the current need, especially with the technology that we have. This bill does nothing for those who have irrefutable proof of abuse in the form of DNA and video evidence. Police can find a VHS tape with a brutal attack on it and they would be powerless to even have the chance to SEEK JUSTICE because of the systemic oppression of anyone who seeks to alter the laws pertaining to the statute of limitations. I'm pretty sure this isn't the first committee to hear testimony like this. It definitely will not be the last.

The hands of District Attorneys are still tied if they want to prosecute a repeat offender, who has been good at beating his charges over the years, yet they finally get something he can't lie his way out of, and they STILL can't do anything. It allows perpetrators to get off on a technicality. That's why I've asked Mr. Courtney's office to look into whether or not the statute of limitations can be repealed completely and go retroactive for people who have been denied justice for far too long. Even if only 10 or 15 victims can be found like us, and even if the offender only gets probation or a slap on the wrist IF they can be prosecuted, then you have at least given the system a chance to work out a just resolution.

I can tell you right now that being able to have a Grand Jury review the facts and let you know you aren't crazy does more for closure and peace after an attack than anything else. The entire time I told my story to investigators I did it in a way that came from a place of feeling responsible for what happened to me, I felt like I had to make sure they knew what I did wrong also, like I let it happen, so it was my fault, too.

However, it turns out it's actually not ok to drug and rape and hold girls against their will. Wow. First time I ever heard that. That's why I wish someone would add a "Legal vs. Illegal Sexual Behavior" component to all that crazy sex education stuff they're teaching in the schools nowadays. At least add something the kids don't *already know*. Ten years old is now the average age kids are coming in contact with hardcore porn, so all that other stuff is also a day late and a dollar short, sort of how I view this bill.

I was told that it would be too expensive to let it go retroactive and it would overload the prosecutors.

So, if a million victims come forward, and someone is worried about the financial impact, aren't the priorities a little backwards? Do you have any idea how much money it costs the state annually in lost income, mental health and victim services, child protection services, the foster care system, law enforcement, etc. to continue ignoring the epidemic of sexual assault in our state? I've been told that I should apply for disability so that I can have the taxpayers pay for what HE did to me. The cost is already too great. Inaction would be akin to negligence at this point. But as a taxpayer who is now in the tax bracket that keeps the whole world afloat, putting more of a burden on taxpayers and less accountability on offenders is not going to help anyone.

I would actually think that the Defense Attorneys would be in favor of completely eliminating the statute of limitations because it would “stimulate their economy”. Even if only 50 offenders made it through the grand jury process, those 50 offenders will then need their services. We don’t need the defense attorneys fighting a rape case BEFORE there’s a crime to pursue, that would make them OFFENSE attorneys. It’s like they know they did it, know it can be proven, but they’re fighting the process that would give the system its chance to work the way it is *supposed* to.

I fully believe that we are innocent until proven guilty and we have the most functional, albeit imperfect, justice system on the planet right now, especially when we give it a chance to work.

I’ve lived an interesting life. I feel like the places I’ve been and the people I’ve met along the way have shaped my views on the criminal justice system in a profound way. While I cannot apologize enough for everything I did before I became a Christian, I’ve actually been the defendant in a criminal case before, I can tell you right now I completely support the position of the prosecution in my case and I’m glad I got a lengthy sentence. Those who know how much I support the rehabilitation programs in our state prisons know why.

Some of our prisons are more like boarding schools compared to other countries, even compared to other states. There are worse things than prison. I didn’t lose my freedom by breaking the law as much as I lost my freedom from someone breaking the law against me. Think about that for a second. Unfortunately, there are too many people who know what it’s like to lose all your freedom and be so trapped that death would be preferable.

The only reason I can think of why someone would fight so feverishly to keep the statute of limitations in tact is to protect themselves, otherwise, why in the world would anyone NOT want justice and protection for victims? Why are there people fighting so hard to keep costs down by not holding people accountable? Why are we still in the dark ages when it comes to victims’ rights?

This will not go away; you cannot close your eyes to the suffering of others forever. We’ve been denied justice on every level, but I’m appealing to YOU to rise above the nonsense, kick gender violence where it hurts, and send a message to every would-be rapist that you WILL be held accountable, no matter how long it takes us to find you.

We’re supposed to be progressive here in Oregon, and it’s time for us to finally make real progress in this area.

Thank you.