

Testimony of Benjamin Tudor - May 27th 2015

Bill #HB2317

Senate Judiciary Committee

Chair (Senator) Prozansky

Vice-Chair (Senator) Kruse

My name is Benjamin Tudor. I am submitting written testimony in support of amending HB2317 to extend Oregon's statute of limitations to 20 years.

I am 26 years old. I see Oregon's very short statute of limitations – currently only six years, one of the shortest in the U.S. – as one of the many burdensome inheritances that your generation, members of the State Senate Judiciary Committee, is bequeathing to mine -- along with other problems like global warming and environmental pollution. If you do not fix our statute of limitations during the current legislative session, we will have to come back, clean up after you, and fix it ourselves. So I urge you, fix our statute of limitations now.

Born and raised in Portland, I grew up unaware until I was 19 of the fact that my mother had been raped in her childhood home. Not knowing about the trauma she had suffered as a teenager, I frequently was puzzled by her intense insistence on security: keeping all the doors and windows in our house secured, constantly double-checking that the security alarm was on. Her attitude seemed especially odd because I was the kind of kid who wasn't afraid of anything.

In 2008, after one year of college, I joined the U.S. Army Rangers, and served for five and a half years on missions in Afghanistan, missions that I'm not allowed to describe to you. Today, I am back in college, studying criminal justice.

I can't say that what happened to my mother has determined my career path. I can say that what she always told my older brother and me, as we were growing up, has stayed with me. She taught us to go for our very best. If we believed in ourselves, she said, we could conquer anything. When you stand up for truth and justice and what you know to be right -- then you never back down. You swing for the bleachers.

That's why you're hearing from me today. I want to be sure that other rape victims in Oregon are able to receive justice. Our statute of limitations failed my mother, and she never did receive justice. Please give future victims the time they need to recover and go to court.

The fact that Oregon is number two among the states in the incidence of rape is shameful. It's even more shameful that only about three percent of rapists nationwide serve any jail time at all. That's *got* to change.

I believe that extending Oregon's statute of limitations to 20 years will: 1) encourage more victims to report to the police, and 2) deter rapists who will have to think twice about whether they can dodge arrest for two decades.

As one of your fellow Senators has said, "It's a no-brainer."

Just do it. Now.