

# Support Survivors

Increase the civil statute of limitations for child sexual abuse.

- 1 Increase** the civil statute of limitations
- Allow survivors of childhood sexual assault to **bring civil action** when they are comfortable to do so
- 3** Create laws that acknowledge and are consistent with the **known impact of sexual trauma**

Current law provides **sexual violence survivors** with a **limited window** (two years) to bring civil action against their abusers. This is **incongruent with the severity of the crime** and the impact of trauma. Over the past three years, New Jersey has made substantive changes to law and policy to better serve survivors of sexual violence. Making **common-sense changes** to the civil statute of limitations is the next logical step to **best serve every survivor** in New Jersey.



**Sexual violence has an emotional, physical, and financial impact.**

Sexual abuse has a negative impact on children's **educational attainment**, later **job performance**, and **earnings** (*MacMillan, 2000, Anda et al., 2004*).

The lifetime financial burden for survivors of sexual violence is estimated to be **\$122,461** per victim (*Peterson, DeGue, Florence, & Lokey, 2017*).

Civil suits **hold abusers accountable** directly to survivors, rather than the state.

Civil litigation for survivors of childhood sexual abuse forces perpetrators and those who caused the abuse to pay for the harm they caused or permitted (*sol-reform.com/data*).

**The FBI recognizes rape as the second most violent crime - the first of which is murder.**

But the following crimes currently have a **longer civil statute of limitations than rape** in New Jersey:

- Property damage (6 years)
- Trespassing (6 years)
- Fraud (6 years)
- Contracts violations (6 years)

**A two year statute of limitations fails to acknowledge the impact of trauma.**

A survey of adult survivors of child sexual abuse found **almost half** did not tell anyone for **over a year** (*Smith et al., 2000*).



Between **delays in reporting** due to trauma, **wait times for services**, and other considerations, a two year statute of limitations **can expire before a survivor feels ready** to pursue that option.



There is **no criminal statute of limitations** for sexual assault in N.J.



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against sexual assault