

URGENT: BILL [SF 32](#) – a non-partisan bill & my personal testimony

Good Afternoon Legislators,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Kylie DeWees, and I was born and raised in Iowa. I was sexually abused and had my virginity taken by an Iowa school employee as a minor. The institution forced my abuser to resign, paid for my first 10 therapy sessions, then sent my family and I on our way.

While the police wanted to press criminal charges, I was scared and depressed, just trying to survive. I was not strong enough to come forward at that time. When a victim is not willing to testify (which happens in many cases), the state drops the case. The Iowa school board revoked my abusers teaching and coaching license in the state of Iowa, but that was no problem because the abuser left to coach in another state.

Meanwhile, for the past 11 years I have gone to therapy because of this abuse. I pay for therapy weekly, see a psychiatrist monthly, and take medication every day in relation to the sexual abuse I suffered from an Iowa school employee. The abuse affects my personal relationships, and even caused my family members to begin therapy and psychiatric medications.

I have 3 questions that might allow you to see things from a victim's perspective:

- (1) Why am I the one paying for the costs associated with being sexually abused as a minor by an Iowa school employee?
- (2) Why did my abuser and institution benefit from the fact that this heinous act occurred within Iowa's borders? Whereas if I was abused in 44 other states, I would have access.
- (3) Why is it that if the Larry Nassar Case happened in Iowa, majority of the victims would not be allowed access to our civil courts at the time they came forward, just like me?

Iowa's current laws told me I had only 5 years to find an attorney, heal enough to speak about my traumatic abuse, then file a lawsuit, otherwise the civil statute of limitation says, "you snooze you lose, but the abuser and institutions are free as a bee." In fact, as Iowa laws currently stand, someone who had their house egged, or tire slashed, has the exact same amount of time to get into civil court as a minor who was sexually abused by a school employee. The difference? A house and tire can be replaced. I wish the memories that that were slashed into my mind and body could be replaced, but child sex abuse is not like any other tort. There is no justice for victims to "speak up" when we are not allowed access to civil courts.

Unlucky for me I guess. No one in my family is a lawyer. I didn't know any lawyers. I thought I was doing the right thing by going to therapy and trying to get over anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Oh, and I did not know what "statute of limitation" even meant, until I was a law student, and by then it was too late.

Now, after recently turning 26 years old, I will continue to bear the extremely expensive costs of the abuse I encountered as a minor, with no legal remedy. This is due to the fact that my abuser was lucky and decided to sexually abuse me in the state of Iowa, who is in the bottom 13% of states with the shortest amount of time a victim has to come forward, when the average age for a victim of sexual abuse as a minor to come forward is age 52.

Please, please enact [SF 32](#) into law this legislative session, and allow victims like myself access to civil court. To expose the abusers and institutions alike so that children do not have to change the entire trajectory of their lives like mine. Thank you for your valuable time and attention to this urgent and important matter.

Respectfully,

Kylie DeWees