

Oral Testimony of Tim Lennon

February 3, 2021

Greeting

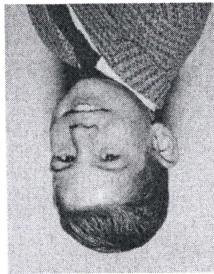
Honorable Chairman and Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for the privilege of speaking with you today. I testify in support of House Bill 1382.

My Story

My name is Tim Lennon. I am a survivor of rape and sexual abuse when I was twelve years old in Sioux City, Iowa, about 1960. My story is relevant to House Bill 1382 as memories of the rape remained buried for fifty years.

I was sexually abused for several months by my parish priest and violently raped. The abuse stopped when the predator got caught abusing another child; he was then removed and transferred to another assignment. Memories of the rape and sexual molestation remained buried until 2010, fifty years later.

Picture of me at about the time of the rape and sexual abuse.



How do memories surface?

My rape and sexual abuse are so horrific that I buried the memories for decades. Many other child victims of sexual violence suppress their memories in drugs, alcohol, or even suicide. Sadly, some are so emotionally damaged that they are unable to speak. This is why we refer to ourselves as survivors—we survived.

In my case, when my twin daughters turned twelve, it evoked memories of when I was twelve. These memories, in turn, caused many PTSD troubles. Various events can prompt memories, such as news stories, therapy, or locations.

Child sex abuse is a lifelong harm and injury

Sexual violence is equivalent to murder. The damage is significant—there is no statute of limitation of harm suffered by other survivors and me. I am 73; every day, I suffer from PTSD, depression, low self-esteem, and anxiety. Every day.

What gets me up in the morning is the anger at what happened to me and my compelling drive to make sure that what happens to me does not happen to another child.

SOL Reform protects the community

Predators abuse for decades, some abuse hundreds of children until their eighties. If they sexually abused one child, we know that they abused a dozen children previously and know that they will harm dozens after. If the SOL timeframe is limited and the victims take decades to come forward, this just hands violent sexual predators a 'get out of jail card.' This, in turn, allows continued abuse without consequence, and the community is not safe.

Review of child sex abuse victims:

30% or more victims never come forward and report abuse

Memories of sexual violence are buried for decades where some victims of bury memories for a lifetime using drugs and alcohol

Many victims commit suicide (the fortunate, like myself, are survivors)

In summary, child sex predators are not held accountable. The community is not safe. I am a parent, and it horrifies me to think that weak SOL laws may endanger my children and the children of every community.

My Advocacy

I am the President of the Board of Directors of the *Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests*, SNAPnetwork.org. SNAP is a peer network of

over 30,000 survivors and supporters and is a 501(c)3 non-profit. SNAP was founded thirty years ago. The mission is to support survivors, protect the vulnerable, and hold predators accountable.

I have been an active volunteer and national leader with SNAP for the previous ten years. Most of the time, I acted as a correspondent for the SNAP website. I have spoken to or written to many thousands of survivors over the years. As a member of SNAP leadership, I have engaged with several state legislators to advocate reform of SOL laws in Iowa, South Dakota, Arizona, and Louisiana.

I also traveled to the Vatican twice as part of a SNAP team to call for reform; the latest visit was one year ago. I have been interviewed by national and international newspapers, TV network news, magazines, radio, and hundreds of other media outlets.

I have a blog with a considerable amount of information about my story and background. I have other supporting material that is helpful for other victims and survivors. <https://standupspakeup.org/>

I presently live in Tucson, Arizona. I welcome all questions.

Tim Lennon

President

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