

Dear Madam Chair Larson and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak today. My name is A [REDACTED] R [REDACTED]. HB 1145 originally started out as disabling mental condition legislation. Why? To raise awareness and importance on the disabling mental effects of sexual assault and provide a remedy so victims can seek the only recourse they have left after an assault-justice. To let legislators know that PTSD does not only affects veterans. The National Women's Study reported that almost one-third of all rape victims develop PTSD sometime during their lives.

So how has PTSD affected my life? As you may recall, I was the victim of a sexual assault at the age of 18 by a male nursing supervisor at 2 in the morning while I was sleeping. I am now a 47-year-old woman who has a broken and terrified 18-year-old girl inside of her who gets triggered by the most mundane things. For instance, I am watching a tv show where a male doctor enters a patient's room, asks her how she is doing, and states he will be back later in the evening to check on her. Suddenly the broken and terrified 18-year-old version of me is triggered and is too scared to sleep at night. So, 47-year-old version of me has to try and function the next day on zero sleep. It is a constant battle for survival each day where fear quickly overtakes any rational thinking.

Children under the age of 18 were provided 21 years to come forward and seek justice. Yet, those who are 18 and 1 day older are left with three and now seven years. Although our family is extremely grateful for the change, it is not enough time. This has been incredibly difficult on my entire family, and we do not want another family to have to stand up here because their loved one missed the Statute of Limitations time frame. Children are our future adults. Perpetrators go after and seek opportunities. And that can include an eight-year-old boy

playing at a neighborhood park, a 21-year-old college student walking back from campus late at night, a 35-year-old woman who is putting groceries away in the back of her car or a 60 year old woman who left her window open one hot summer night. By putting a time frame that is one third less than what children (future adults) receive is frankly an injustice to our entire society. As someone who was sexually assaulted as both a child (age ten) and an adult (age 18) I can say both were equally traumatizing and have required years of therapy to recover from. I remember Stewart Stenberg giving me the Dickinson Police Care Bear because he knew how terrified I was to be speaking with him about the sexual assault.

I often think about how the actual conversation went with Detective Stenberg:

A [REDACTED], I know you are going through so much in your life right now, but you do not have much time. It was only after a full investigation was done into my sexual assault by Stewart Stenberg and the only other female nurse on duty that night was finally investigated, whose story corroborated mine, did I finally realize it was not a bad dream. That gave me approximately one year and five months to seek criminal charges.

I often think about how comforting the conversation would have been if it went this way instead with Detective Stenberg: A [REDACTED], I know you are going through so much in your life right now. I know your parents paid almost \$100,000 for you to receive the desperate help you needed from a rape at the age of ten and instead you were sexually assaulted by a male nursing supervisor and not believed by the hospital at the age of 18, but you have 21 years to heal and seek justice. Your police report is solid and documents the full sexual assault. If it takes you 21 years to come forward, then you still have a case because it is all documented within your police report.

The State Capitol recently completed accessibility improvements. The article stated, "People with disabilities have the same right as everybody else and that includes access." Imagine for a moment you were involved in a head on collision with a drunk driver. You survived, but were in a wheelchair unsure you would ever walk again. You want to go to court, seek justice, and you can because you have access (ramps & elevators) to assist you. But imagine for a moment there was no access to assist you. No one would ever walk up to you in your wheelchair, tell you that you have three or now seven years to seek physical therapy, and figure out a way to enter that building and seek justice without access.

Yet, that is how we speak to people suffering from disabling mental conditions, such as PTSD, each and every day. We put a strict time limit on justice for them and provide no access. We can't protect everyone from sexual assault, but we can provide the time to heal so all citizens, not just children, have the ability to receive justice for what happened to them. Why not open up the Statue of Limitations so it is the same for both children and adults? After all, North Dakota needs to be a place not only full of immense possibilities, innovations, economic growth and development, but also a place for justice. Thank you. Questions?