

I am in support of extending the statute of limitations for victims of sex crimes. I have witnessed the trauma and PTSD, my best friend endured, from being raped at the age of 10 years old. She was also molested by a nurse (while seeking help), seven years later. My best friend's name is A█████ R█████, who is also speaking out regarding this bill.

I remember how spunky and self-confident A█████ was, prior to the age of 10 years old. I used to play softball with A█████ and she was a rockstar player and full of life. I'm not sure exactly why she stood out in my mind, but I was drawn to her energy.

Fast forward several years later, A█████ transferred to the same Catholic school as me. Soon, I realized that something had changed. That same spunky girl that I once knew, had grown into a quiet and meek teenager. I wasn't sure what had happened, and frankly I didn't think too much about it at the time. Both A█████ and I felt like outsiders at our school, and it didn't take long before she became my best friend. She was someone that I felt comfortable with. It was us against the world!

During our senior year in high school, I noticed that A█████ had begun to struggle more and more. She was depressed, and often spoke about death. I remember A█████ made clouds out of cardboard and cotton, that she hung them from her bedroom ceiling. A█████ used to talk about how she wanted to be in the clouds with her grandma. I didn't ask many questions, nor did I talk about this with others. I thought it was normal because I, too, had suicidal thoughts every day. Unfortunately, it had all become too much for A█████ and she was eventually admitted to the hospital. When this happened, I felt like my world was crashing down. A█████ was my best friend and one of the very few people that I hung out. Now what was I to do? I was sad and a little angry, but most of all I missed my best friend.

Over the next few months, that A█████ finally told me about the rape that happened when she was 10 years old. I was shocked, as this was someone that we both knew and interacted with. What should I do when I see him? He was a person of authority and someone that I had respected. I decided to act normal. I pretended that I didn't know what a scumbag he really was.

I later learned that a nurse had molested A█████ while she was seeking help at the hospital. The same thing happened to a 14-year-old girl, and A█████ voluntarily provided her own written testimony. A█████'s testimony helped the young girl win her case against that nurse and the hospital. I once asked A█████ why she didn't also press charges against the nurse. I remember the look in A█████'s eyes as she said quietly lowered her head and said that she couldn't do it. At that moment, I knew that it would have been too much for A█████. She still had so much healing to do first.

Throughout the years, I saw A█████ go up and down in her recovery. I always felt saddened watching her struggle, but relieved that she didn't turn to drugs or alcohol. A█████ admitted that she still continues to have sleepless nights or feels uncomfortable unless she's in an open area with a light and/or the tv on.

What people need to realize is there is no time limit for trauma and its victims. It is a life sentence. The current statute of limitations, for a victim to be well enough to stand trial, just isn't fair. Imagine if this same thing happened to your child, your sibling, or your best friend. Wouldn't you want them to receive compassion to allow them time to recovery? These victims deserve the same right to seek out justice when (or if) they become ready.