

Dear Chairman Larson and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak today. My name is A [REDACTED] R [REDACTED]. In my senior year of high school, I became extremely suicidal and had severe PTSD from a rape at the age of ten. As a result, my parents decided the mental health unit at a hospital in Dickinson, ND was the safest place for me. While on a home visit from the mental health unit, I overdosed on caffeine pills and was taken to the Intensive Care Unit in that same hospital.

Early that evening, I was introduced to the overnight male nurse in charge. He asked me if I had a boyfriend to which I responded no. He asked me if I was a virgin to which I responded yes other than my rape. He then stated, "you mean a pretty girl like yourself has never had sex before?" I felt uncomfortable with his questions and wondered how they pertained to my caffeine overdose, but he was the nurse in charge, so I responded.

At exactly 2 am, I awoke to the male nurse's hand inside my underwear. He told me they needed to take my underwear off. I started crying and told him to please stop and that he was hurting me. He then left the room and a female nurse who heard my yelling entered to check. Terrified, I did not tell her what happened, but I asked her to please stay with me until I fell asleep and not let the male nurse enter my room again. When another nurse came to bring me back to the mental health unit, I trusted her, so I told her what happened. In a raised voice, she stated she can't believe I would accuse a well-respected nurse of such a horrific act and that I just had a bad dream. The hospital informed my parents there were allegations of a sexual assault. My parents believed me, but thought the hospital had done a thorough investigation and found no evidence.

Approximately one year later, I read the front page of the Dickinson Press which stated, "Dickinson nurse pleads innocent." I turned to my mom and said this is the nurse that hurt me, and I want to help this girl. My mom and I met with Stewart Stenberg, the former lead detective of the case. I remember he was nice and gave me this teddy bear. When Stewart asked what time I remember being sexually assaulted, he informed me that was the exact time the 14 year old victim was sexually assaulted on a different floor than the male nurse even supervised.

Stewart completed an investigation on my case and the female nurse who came into my room to check after she heard my yelling and comforted me was interviewed. It was determined that her story corroborated mine and the male nurse lied in his nursing notes to cover up my sexual assault. At the time I came forth to the hospital with allegations, that female nurse, who was the only other nurse on duty that night, had not been interviewed. For nearly 29 years, I have carried the blame for the sexual assault on that 14-year-old girl. I felt if I had not been a psychiatric patient at the time maybe I would have been more believable resulting in a more thorough investigation where the hospital would have interviewed that female nurse on duty. This is a copy of my police report.

Stewart told my mom and I that the 14-year-old girl and her family were going after the hospital for civil damages and encouraged us to join suit. It was during this time that I had another mental setback as a result of my PTSD and said I cannot continue. It was not that my case was any less provable or injurious than the other victim, but due to my PTSD I was only able to provide a supporting statement. As a result, the male nurse was charged with gross sexual imposition, sentenced to three years in prison, and got his nursing license revoked.

My parents still owe approximately \$67,000 on this hospital bill from the mental health unit. And they have been paying \$50 each month for the past 29 years. My parents were proud of me for what I could do-provide a supporting statement to help that 14-year-old girl and her family receive justice and take a molester out of a hospital setting.

At the age of 18, I was put on full disability. I could still easily be living on disability feeling sorry for myself for what happened to me. Instead, at the age of 23 when I got my first full time job with benefits, I quit disability completely. For most of my life, I have only wanted to be a survivor of what happened to me. Now that I am stronger, I want healing and justice is an integral part of that process.

I started EMDR therapy for my PTSD. Each therapy session costs me approximately \$40 each week or \$160 a month out of pocket. EMDR requires sleep for your body and mind to effectively process trauma. As a result of the sexual assault from the nurse at the hospital, I still have extreme difficulty sleeping past 2 am. This sexual assault with the nurse at the hospital has caused delays in my therapy for the trauma I originally struggled with-a rape at age ten.

Representative Austen Schauer stated since that statute of limitations was extended that in the entire history of North Dakota only two cases have had enough evidence to be heard in court. Allowing a two-year window does not make it easier for victims. You still have to prove your case in a court of law. I am not just a woman standing before you today with a sad story about a sexual assault at a hospital that happened 29 years ago. I am a woman standing before you today with my police report documenting a sexual assault at a hospital that happened 29 years ago. I and my family deserve to be the third case in North Dakota history to be heard in court. Thank you. Questions?