

January 29, 2023

Dear Chairman Larson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Paula Rebsom and I was born and raised in Dickinson, North Dakota but currently reside in Seattle, Washington. I flew home this week in order to be here to support my family that has suffered from collective trauma for nearly 30 years as a result of my sister, A [REDACTED] R [REDACTED]'s multiple sexual assaults. I am also here to stand for and support the countless other survivors of sexual assaults and their families who have been blocked from seeking justice due to this state's current statute of limitations law.

You have heard the story of how my sister was raped at the age of 10 and told her family would be killed if she told anyone, how she became suicidal and was admitted to the mental health unit at our local hospital where she was once again sexually assaulted while trying to process the trauma of her prior assault. What you haven't heard is that my sister has not waited 29 years in order to seek justice, she has contacted multiple lawyers over the years to see if her case could be re-opened only to continually be told the SOL had run out because at the time of the assault, she had just turned 18. Each time my sister has tried to seek justice, the wounds of the past resurface as raw as they were when initially inflicted. It is mentally and physical exhausting work for her, but also for our family. We all regress in our healing each time she seeks justice, but giving up feels like we are betraying all of the work my sister has done to be where she is today and that is not an option for us.

After her last attempt to revive her case, a lawyer told her the only way to seek justice was to get the law changed. And so, for the past 2 years that has tirelessly been her mission. She worked with CAWS of North Dakota who connected her with Representative Austen Schauer. He listened, he believed in her cause, he assembled a team and they drafted HB 1145 which was presented to the House Judiciary Committee on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023. An amended version was passed by the full House on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023. While the amendment's that were made by the Judiciary House subcommittee

reduce the impact this bill could have had, it is a small step in the right direction and I am so proud of the work that she did for this bill's passage and grateful for everyone who helped it get through this far.

Yet for all the effort my sister has done in working towards getting the law changed, she will still not be able to benefit from it should it pass. As you move forward, I ask you to please not forget those left behind by this state's current statute of limitations law which provides more protections for assailants and institutions than it does for survivors of sexual assault. Please stop the exhaustive loop of survivors and their families needing to relive their trauma in order to get laws changed. This bill would finally give my sister, my family, and countless other survivors of sexual assault the chance we all deserve to seek justice, which is an integral and necessary part of the healing process.

My sister did not choose to be sexually assaulted. No one does. Yet from the moment the assault occurs the course of their lives and their families' lives are forever changed. The survivor's ability to seek justice is also something they do not get to choose. It is decided for them by the state's current SOL laws in which the assault occurred and whether it is something that happened in the past, present, or future. A survivor of assault also does not choose to intentionally delay or stall justice. It is a matter of survival for them and in some cases a matter of life and death.

Do not let the opposition tell you this bill can't be done. At least 9 states have enacted some form of revival window laws and many more states have bills being proposed at their current legislative sessions. You have a choice today to stand for survivors of sexual assault. You have the chance to give them a choice in their path towards justice and healing, giving them back control of a part of their life that was so unjustly taken away from them. I urge you to give SB 2282 a DO PASS recommendation

Thank you for your time,

Paula Rebsom