



**PRESS ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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UPDATED: ALLIANCE OF SURVIVORS, ADVOCATES FORM THE UNITED FRONT FOR PA SOL REFORM

Survivors and advocates have formed the United Front for Pennsylvania SOL Reform to demand justice for survivors of child sex abuse by pushing for a statutory window. The United Front forms at a critical time for Pennsylvania's survivors as it was recently revealed that the Pennsylvania State Department was negligent in its handling of the window constitutional amendment, further delaying justice for survivors.

Executive Director of **CHILD USA** Advocacy, and a survivor of family abuse, **Kathryn Robb, Esq.**, has been working on legislative changes to reform statute of limitations (SOL) across the country for years. She says, "The debacle at the Secretary of State's office is yet another re-injury to victims, especially when that route was unnecessary from the start. The time has come for the leadership in both chambers to do right by victims, follow the national trend, and pass a window statutorily."

The United Front for PA SOL Reform, organized by CHILD USA and CHILD USA Advocacy, is an alliance of organizations, survivors, and advocates who are demanding long-awaited justice for survivors of child sex abuse. The United Front seeks to attain justice for survivors and to prevent further abuse by pushing for a revival window - a law that will eliminate the civil statute of limitations for all victims of child sex abuse, for a set period of time, even if the SOL has expired.

According to **Jennifer Storm**, the author of *Blackout Girl*, "This is a huge setback for survivors. The window bill needs to be brought back up and passed now. No constitutional amendment. Period. Survivors have waited long enough. 2023 to go to ballot is unacceptable. This is unconscionable. While this is through no fault of the legislature, now is the time for the legislature to do the right thing by survivors and pass the original window bill now. Give survivors access to justice. Period."

CHILD USA's CEO and national expert on statute of limitations, **Professor Marci Hamilton**, commented, "The constitutional amendment path was a detour from the grit and determination of Pennsylvania survivors for 16 years, who have fought for justice and SOL reform so valiantly. It is now time to get down to business with a statutory window that will serve the public's interest of identifying still-hidden child abusers, shift the cost of abuse from the victims to those who caused it, and educate the public on the scope of this problem. It will also restore to the state treasury the Medicare funds that had to be paid to victims, because those responsible weren't held to account. We all need SOL reform to make PA a safer and better place!"

Karen Baker, the CEO at the **Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape**, shared, "We are disheartened, to say the least, by news that a retroactive window could be further delayed. This news must be placed in context—in what has been at least a decade-long legislative fight for justice and healing for child sexual abuse survivors. Victims and survivors—who have been the courageous and generous leaders of this effort—have had to wait far too long. We join with survivors, lawmakers, and advocates in exploring ways to expedite the civil window



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for justice, this legislative session, despite this setback. We have seen success in other states and can make it a reality for Pennsylvania too. We owe it to survivors, who should not have to wait any longer.”

Sarah Klein, an attorney, advocate, and survivor, said, “If you looked up the definition of re-victimization in the dictionary, what came to light today would be a prime example. The constitutional amendment route was a harmful delay tactic and was troubling enough. Today’s events are appalling and simply unacceptable. Pennsylvania must get on the right side of history and follow in the footsteps of New York, New Jersey, California, and others by passing a statutory window immediately. Stop torturing survivors. Give them the access to justice they so rightfully deserve.”

Pennie Hockenberry, the Acting Victim Advocate of the Office of Victim Advocate, noted, “This additional victimization to survivors is unconscionable. The Office of Victim Advocate fully supports measures that abolish all time constraints on survivors and encourages swift passage of a renewed window to justice, allowing time-barred victims to bring forth claims and expose predators within our communities.”

Confidential support, counseling, and advocacy services are available throughout the Commonwealth 24/7 by calling 1-888-772-7227 or accessing <https://pcar.org/help-pa/find-services>

CHILD USA tracks each state’s statutes of limitation for child sex abuse at www.childusa.org/law

Anyone interested in joining this historic movement toward justice for PA’s victims should email info@childusadvocacy.org.

AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT

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About CHILD USA

CHILD USA is the leading national nonprofit think tank working to end child abuse and neglect in the United States. CHILD USA engages in high-level legal, social science, and medical research and analysis to derive the best public policies to end child abuse and neglect in America. CHILD USA produces evidence-based solutions and information needed by policymakers, organizations, media, and society as a whole to increase child protection and the common good. Visit www.childusa.org for more information.

About CHILD USAAdvocacy

CHILD USAAdvocacy is a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization dedicated to ending child abuse and neglect by advocating for better laws for child protection. Drawing on the combined expertise of the nation’s leading child advocates, specifically our sister organization and national think tank, CHILD USA. CHILD USAAdvocacy is committed to protecting children’s civil liberties and keeping children safe from abuse and neglect. Visit www.childusadvocacy.org for more information.



About the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape

The mission of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape is to work to eliminate all forms of sexual violence and to advocate for the rights and needs of victims of sexual assault. Founded in 1975, PCAR works to end sexual violence and advocates for the rights and needs of all sexual assault victims. PCAR partners with a network of rape crisis programs to bring help, hope, and healing around issues of sexual violence to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Visit www.pcar.org for more information.

