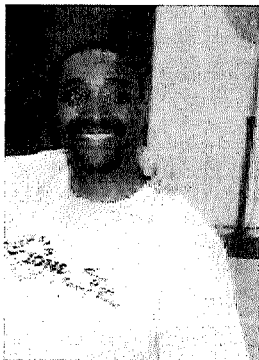


SB317 Testimony
Tess Ramirez, esq. MBA
Survivor of childhood sexual abuse

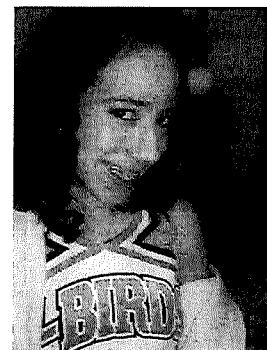


“Just let me . . . just for a second,” he whispered in my ear. I’m frozen; I know I should escape but I can’t bring my muscles to move. My mind is racing but I can’t put a single thought together. There is no point in screaming; we are the only two people in the building.

He slides his hands under my shirt to touch my breasts and then into my shorts. There’s nothing I can do to stop him.

That night was horrifying. He texted me later that night, asking if I still loved him and saying that he would make it “far and few between.” He wasn’t planning to stop.

What I learned later, was almost equally frightening. After the police got involved, I soon found out that I was not David Byrd’s first victim. In fact, if you read the criminal case file where he plead guilty, you’ll see several statements from other girls saying he assaulted them and even one that said he raped her in the early 90s.



As I have been speaking publicly about my abuse, more victims have come forward. As of today, there are 11 of us that we know of. One of those girls even had their abuse substantiated by DCF, but somehow David Byrd always got away with it.

If he had been criminally prosecuted or faced a jury in the civil system, the fact that he is a sexual predator would have been public knowledge. My parents could have been warned and I could have been kept safe.

Here’s the problem and the reason we’re here today, in Kansas, survivors of child sexual abuse currently only have 3 years after they turn 18 to bring a civil claim against their abuser. That means that a survivor has to accept what has happened to them, be comfortable talking about it publicly, and have the means to file a lawsuit before they turn 21.

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Talking about the worst thing that's ever happened to you is extremely difficult. Yes, my abuser was prosecuted in my case, but not because I was able to talk about it publicly. I told my best friend the night that it happened, expecting it be a secret, but she told me I had to tell my dad or that she would. If it weren't for her I think my story would have a very different ending. That being said, I'm 29 years old and only started really talking about what happened to me and processing my trauma about 2 years ago. That sort of timeline is not uncommon for survivors of childhood abuse and many need much more time than that. The current statute of limitations does not give survivors nearly enough time to process what they've been through to a point where they're ready to talk about it in a room full of strangers.

Notwithstanding that, most 18 to 20 year olds don't know how to file a lawsuit or even where to begin. Sure, they could hire an attorney, but as an attorney myself I can confirm that we are very expensive. Most young adults are just trying to make sure they can cover rent. They can't afford to sue anyone even if they want to.

All of this to say, requiring sexual abuse survivors to file a civil suit before they 21 is unreasonable. It isn't doing anything except keeping the public in the dark about who is or was sexually abusing children. If any of the many girls who say they were assaulted by David Byrd before me had been given the time they needed to be ready to confront him publicly, I could have been saved.

We have the opportunity and the power to protect survivors and prevent perpetrators from continuing to sexually abuse children. It's time to remove the statute of limitations for these acts. Thank you.