

Dear Senate members,

Thank you for allowing me to speak today on such an important issue that is very close to my heart. I stand before you as a survivor, a survivor of the unthinkable! A survivor of things I don't want to speak about, however I know that words and my story can hold power. A power that I never gave away to anyone! In 2016 I was raped in my home by an acquaintance! It completely rocked my world! There is nothing about me that is the same as it was before that day. I immediately started trauma therapy and would continue to receive that therapy for four years. In 2020 I was telling my therapist about an incident that happened when I was 15. After I spoke about what happened she said, "Katie you know that is rape right?" I was devastated how did I not fully know or grasp and be able to completely articulate the impact that this event had on me? It was because I was a child! My brain wasn't even fully developed and it was trying to protect me all these years. I was raped by two grown men in a hotel while another man watched! I now realize I was set up by a former friend to be assaulted for these men's sick pleasure. Subconsciously I knew and so did my body! I begin having chronic migraines, I dropped out of high school, and I now know that I was experiencing undiagnosed depression for nearly a decade before I was diagnosed and sought treatment. Sexual violence is very confusing. I grew up very sheltered and didn't even know what rape was, I told 5 adults and nobody did anything so why would I be led to believe that what occurred was wrong. 3 out of the 5 were youth pastors and people I trusted to help protect me and they failed me as well. Being sexually assaulted shattered me as an adult and rattled me to my core as a child. There is nothing that went unscathed! I literally had to fight for my life. After I fully realized what happened to me as a child I planned to take my own life, the pain was too much to bear and the feelings of shame and regret were vicious! In the midst of this attempt I heard a clear voice from within that said if I ended it all that younger Katie would never receive any justice and these men would be free to rape more children! It was clear to me after that, that I had to report what happened to me! So I reported an 18 year old rape. You see these men are related to each other and my soul was crushed thinking about how they could have done this heinous act to countless other children. I knew the statute of limitations was up but I still felt convinced that I must report it to authorities. To be honest I was really angry that something happened to me as a child had a limitation on it! It felt like I was being punished for not reporting sooner. As children our brains aren't fully developed but yet we are expected to process and articulate what occurred in such a short window of time. Studies have shown that the average age to report childhood sexual abuse is 52, I was 33. That astounded me! After I reported it and spoke with police, they told me that they were going to investigate it a little but that the statute of limitations had ran out so they couldn't prosecute my rape from when I was an innocent child! I thought about all the other innocent children that wouldn't ever get a chance at justice and that is what brings me here today! I am not only here speaking for myself but for all children in Kansas that have been debilitated and impacted by sexual violence. When I wrote this at 3:00 in the morning after I awoke from a nightmare I wasn't aware that there is no look back window for criminal and that the possibility of me seeing justice was gone. I have been reeling since I found out this information two weeks ago. It ripped open every wound because I had hope and now that hope is gone. But now its for the children of the future. There are children being sexually assaulted as we speak and they deserve better from us they deserve a chance at justice that I and so many countless others were not allotted. It is my belief that children deserve better and so I ask you this question, do you believe that as well? I fully support this bill and ask that you do the right thing and protect innocent children in Kansas!

~Katie Pratt