

Senate Judiciary Committee

In Support of SB167

February 20, 2013

Chairman King and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) is a statewide non-profit organization of the 29 sexual and domestic violence programs serving survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence across the state.

KCSDV strongly supports passage of SB167.

In 2011, according to a report issued by the KBI, *a rape occurred every 7 hours, 56 minutes, and 30 seconds.*

Being raped is a life-changing event. As you will hear from conferees today, a rape victim often goes from someone who can and does embrace life to someone afraid of being alone, afraid of working, afraid of whether she or he will be violated again. Rape victims often feel like something within them has been changed and destroyed---forever. Rape is like homicide in this regard. Rape changes one's soul, making it nearly impossible to come back from such a devastating event until the rapist is charged and convicted.

Rape victims whose rapists are never charged or convicted find themselves looking over their shoulders for the rest of their lives. Once the five-year statute of limitations has passed, victims feel they can never rest. Rape can impact victims' lives in a wide variety of ways, including an increase in health issues, struggles with employment and education, family and relationship challenges, and much, much more. Rapist should be held accountable for such long-term and devastating impact.

Currently in Kansas, unless charges are brought within 5 years of the assault, there can be no prosecution. The five-year limitation for such a life-changing crime is time frame that fails to recognize the experience of being a rape victim and the profound effect it has on the rest of the victim's life. Kansas, currently, has one of the shortest statutes of limitation. *See attached chart.*

In 2011, advocacy programs in Kansas provided support services to 4,047 sexual assault victims. During that same time period, law enforcement received 1,103 reports of sexual assault which resulted in 259 arrests.

These numbers indicate that many victims do not or cannot report the crime to law enforcement when the rape first happens. The trauma is too great for many. But, as victims do reach out for help, they quickly learn that support is available to them. It may be at this point that victims report the crime to law enforcement. Many victims who do report at a later time soon realize that the statute of limitations is only five years in Kansas. When that five-year mark passes with no arrest or charges, many victims lose hope that they will ever feel safe again.

Rape is an egregious and serious crime. It is an off-grid crime for sentencing purposes. The statute of limitations should reflect the seriousness of the crime.

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