



February 10, 2022

Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Hart Senate Office Building, Room 216  
120 Constitution Ave NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002

RE: Letter in Support of S. 3103, Eliminating Limits to Justice for Child Sex Abuse Victims Act of 2021

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary,

CHILD USA is the leading national, nonprofit think tank dedicated to advancing children's civil rights. Our Sean P. McIlmail SOL Reform Institute is the global leader on research and analysis of sex abuse statutes of limitations ("SOL"). SOL reform is the leading edge to provide access to justice for victims, shift the cost of the abuse to those who caused it, and to prevent future abuse. It saves the government money, educates the public, and validates the victims. We thank Senators Durbin and Blackburn for introducing this important legislation to eliminate the statutes of limitations for child sexual abuse and exploitation claims under section 2255, and therefore serve the public good.

There is a worldwide epidemic of child sexual abuse that arises from our most trusted institutions, from religious to Olympic sports, to the family. In the United States, approximately **1 in 5 girls and 1 in 13 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18**, and U.S. taxpayers underwrite the cost to society of this epidemic. Among the sex crimes destroying children's lives, online sexual exploitation and abuse of children ("OSEAC") is one of the fastest growing threats to children, with the demand for child sexual abuse material ("CSAM") reaching epidemic proportions in recent years. In 2020, **65.4 million CSAM images and video files** were reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's CyberTipline, the highest number of reports ever received in a single year.

Child sexual abuse in all its forms is cost this country billions in lost productivity and suffering that leads to psychological and even physical illness. The trauma stemming from sexual assault, including in the form of OSEAC, is complex and individualized, and it **impacts victims throughout their lifetimes, to the tune of \$9.3 billion over the lifetime of the victim**, according to Elizabeth J. Letourneau and her colleagues in *The Economic Burden of Child Sexual Abuse in the United States*. Trauma caused by child sexual assault can have devastating impacts on the young adult brain, including posttraumatic stress disorder, disrupted neurodevelopment and impaired social, emotional, and cognitive development. In a CHILD USA study of survivors of abuse in Boy Scouts of America, 51% of survivors disclosed their abuse for the first time at age 50 or older. It is unfair to for victims, their families, and for



taxpayers to shoulder the cost of abuse while those who caused it are protected by statutes of limitations that close before most victims are ready to come forward.

Reforming statutes of limitations serves three main public purposes. It: 1) **identifies hidden child predators** and the institutions that endanger children to the public, it 2) **shifts the cost of abuse** from victims and taxpayers to those who caused it, and it 3) **prevents further abuse** by educating the public about the prevalence, signs, and impact of child sex abuse so that it can be prevented in the future.

The “Eliminating Limits to Justice for Child Sex Abuse Victims Act of 2021” opens the courtroom doors to more victims, which will empower victims to receive the damages they deserve for the injuries they have suffered and thereby educate the public about the prevalence and cost of abuse and makes institutions and individuals accountable. We thank Senators Durbin and Blackburn for their leadership in Congress of this extremely important movement. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions regarding SOL reform or if we can be of assistance in any way on other child protection issues.

Sincerely,



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