

**The Coronavirus Pandemic wreaks havoc on survivors seeking justice under the CVA but it will be worse for survivors who have not yet come forward unless the CVA is extended.**

I represent over 500 survivors who were sexually abused as children in New York and are seeking a measure of justice under the New York Child Victims Act. Many survivors fall into the vulnerable category of potential victims in the pandemic and wonder whether they will ever see justice in their lifetimes. The courts are virtually shut down and survivors wait and wonder when their legal actions will once again move forward. Although the courts are closed, we continue actively prepare the cases of our clients who have taken the important step of coming forward. For those clients, we expect the legal process to move forward expeditiously when the courts reopen. For particularly vulnerable clients we are securing their deposition testimony to preserve their voices should they fall victim to the pandemic.

The survivors we cannot help are those who have not yet come forward. For these people, the coronavirus is particularly cruel. If the CVA is not extended, many of the survivors will miss their long overdue opportunity for justice, due to no fault of their own. Other states that have enacted similar legislation reviving claims that previously could not be filed due to the statute of limitations have recognized that it takes time for survivors to take the significant step of coming forward with their stories, creating windows to file cases of two years or more. New Jersey, for example, has a two year window period that began on December 1, 2019. New York, in contrast, taking into account the court shutdown, could actually have a window period of significantly less than one year. This will most certainly result in survivors with inadequate information or who are not ready to come forward to be left out and their voices denied.

Many survivors go through a personal journey before they are ready to file a lawsuit. This personal journey takes time. I hear from many people who need to tell family, go to therapy and simply deal with the trauma of thinking about long suppressed memories of horrific abuse before they are ready to contact a lawyer to press their case. Many survivors were on the journey when the pandemic hit. People are now consumed with survival of themselves, family and friends. Survivors simply do not have the luxury of a personal journey necessary to file a lawsuit before the CVA expires in August 2020. The CVA must be extended to give these survivors a fair chance to seek justice.