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**Abuse victims win more time to file lawsuits
Court upholds constitutionality of new child sex laws**

A Louisiana law intended to give victims of child sexual abuse access to justice has survived a legal challenge.

In an [opinion](#) issued yesterday, the state's Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the constitutionality of a law that gives those who were sexually abused as children a three-year window during which they can file a civil claim against those responsible for their abuse—regardless of when the abuse occurred.

Before the law passed in 2021, victims of child sexual abuse in Louisiana only had until their 28th birthday to sue their abusers. Short statutes of limitation play into the hands of perpetrators and the institutions that cover up for them; they disable victims' voices and empowerment and leave future children vulnerable to preventable sexual abuse.

"Perhaps the simplest reason sex offenders remain 'under the radar' for years and years and victimize so many innocent children is that by the time victims realize both that they have been abused, and connect their abusive experience to their current problems, and find the courage to step forward, they're then told 'Sorry, you're too late,'" **said Marci Hamilton, founder and CEO of CHILD USA**, a non-profit interdisciplinary think tank fighting for the civil rights of children and the leader in the international movement to reform statutes of limitation for victims of child sexual abuse. "Window laws fix this fundamental flaw. "

Despite vigorous opposition from insurance lobbyists and the Catholic Conference, 26 states and 3 territories have passed similar window bills. "The children in these states are now safer," **said Hamilton**. "Thanks to these laws, the public learned the identities of scores of hidden predators and enabling institutions so that they may finally be brought to justice."

With so many bad actors and institutions in the headlines and thousands of victims coming forward, the pressure for prevention and justice has increased—not only for child victims but adult victims as well. Most states have made statutes of limitation reform a priority, with 49





states and the federal government reforming their child sexual abuse laws since January 2022. Many jurisdictions have amended their statutes of limitation several times and continue to propose new bills year after year.

"The march forward for kids' safety and victims' justice is accelerating, as more legislators realize that 'window' bills are sound proposals, good policy, crime prevention and perhaps the greatest single measure that strikes fear into the hearts of those who commit and conceal child sexual abuse," **said Hamilton.**

About CHILD USA

CHILD USA is the leading nonprofit think tank working to end child abuse and neglect in the United States. CHILD USA engages in high-level legal and social science research and analysis to derive the best public policies to end child abuse and neglect in America. CHILD USA produces evidence-based solutions and information needed by policymakers, organizations, media, and society as a whole to increase child protection and the common good. Visit www.childusa.org for more information.

Contact:

Available for Comment: Marci Hamilton, Founder and CEO of CHILD USA
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Professor Marci Hamilton is a First Amendment constitutional scholar at the University of Pennsylvania who has led the national movement to reform statutes of limitations to reflect the science of delayed disclosure of childhood sexual abuse and who founded CHILD USA, a national nonprofit think tank devoted to ending child abuse and neglect.

Available for Comment: Kathryn Robb, ED, CHILD USA Advocacy
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Kathryn Robb, Esq. is the Executive Director of CHILD USA Advocacy, a national legislative legal expert, and an outspoken survivor of child sexual abuse.

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Jessica Schidlow, ESQ, MA, NCC, has an extensive background in child welfare and leads the Legal Team at CHILD USA. After law school, Jessica joined the Montgomery County Public Defender's Office in their Child Advocacy Unit, where she represented hundreds of at-risk and dependent youth in their Juvenile and Orphan's Court proceedings.

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