

## NJ Statute of Limitations Bill Aims to Help Victims of Sexual Abuse

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The [New Jersey Senate and Assembly](#) have approved a bill lifting the civil statute of limitations on certain sexual offenses. The bill now heads to Governor Murphy's office to sign so it can become law.

Specifically, the legislation would allow child victims to sue up until they turn 55 or within seven years of their first realization that the abuse caused harm. Currently, the law currently limits this range to two years. In addition, the bill would grant adult victims seven years to sue from the discovery of the abuse.

The bill would also give a two-year window to victims who were previously barred by the statute of limitation, and make it easier for victims to seek damages from the institutions that harmed them or enabled their abuse.

The legislation, which has been on New Jersey lawmakers' radar for almost a decade, comes soon after the state's five Roman Catholic dioceses released the names of 188 priests credibly accused sexually abusing minors over decades. With this statement, they also announced last month that they created a compensation fund for the victims.

Once signed, the bill would go into effect on December 1, 2019.

The bill would provide the following measures:

- A two-year window from enactment for the filing of any civil case alleging adult or minor sexual abuse that occurred in the past;
- That anyone under the age of 18 who has been sexually abused in the past would be able to bring a cause of action within the next two years;
- That those who were sexually abused in the past as minors who miss the two-year filing window be able to bring their cause of action until the age of 55;
- That those 55 and older who allege delays in connecting past abuse to damages have an opportunity to seek justice through the courts, which would be a period of seven years from the point they made that connection.

Both the Senate and Assembly may still consider amendments regarding the impact on public entity immunity laws in the future, but the window to make those tweaks ran out before the vote.

According to [Child USA](#), a Philadelphia-based nonprofit research and advocacy group, approximately three-quarters of states have amended their statutes of limitations for child sex abuse cases since 2002.

If you or a loved one have be sexually abused or assaulted, or recently realized that abuse had happened in the past, it is important to understand that you have a right to obtain restitution for your injuries and suffering, both physical and emotional.

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