

May 14, 2025

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Drazen and Pham, members of the House Rules Committee, My name is Charlotte Wilson, and I am a survivor of sexual assault. My abuser was my family doctor, someone whom I never expected to be unsafe or untrustworthy. He abused me for close to ten years, and I wasn't aware of the abuse until after the Oregon Medical Board revoked his license for sexual misconduct in 2020. When I received the phone call that David Farley was no longer practicing, my body experienced a flood of relief, which I didn't understand at the time. My first conscious thought after this announcement was, *I get to have a new doctor now*. My body understood the significance of this before my mind did.

I quickly learned of the reasons behind Farley's supposed "retirement," and even then my mind was working hard to continue protecting me. It would take a couple of months of active knowledge of the true nature of David Farley before I could truly accept what had happened to me. In conversations with other survivors, I started to see my own experiences through an entirely new lens: What I was told was normal care was in fact abuse. What I had believed was a spontaneously traumatic delivery was in fact an intentionally violent one. The trust I had placed in every social system crumbled in a matter of months.

After having lived through not only the trauma itself but the trauma of understanding and accepting the violence enacted against me, I now believe that a statute of limitations in sexual assault cases is not only ineffective, but cruel. Sexual trauma recodes the mind and impairs the survivor's ability to function, sometimes in a debilitating way. The primary goal of the mind during and after sexual trauma is to survive, and both through my own experience and through statistics and studies, reporting rarely equates to survival, especially in the days, months, and years following the assault. While I was being actively abused for ten years, my subconscious mind protected me from that knowledge, and it was only because of others willing to advocate for me that I was able to recognize the truth of what my doctor had done to me. Statutes of limitations in sexual assault cases serve to protect the abuser, not the abused. Reporting abuse is a trauma in and of itself, and in the years since I have reported, I have had to recount my trauma over and over. This process cannot be rushed, nor can it be strongarmed into a convenient legal code.

The aftermath of the realization of my abuse has rearranged not only my current reality but my past. People I thought were safe have proven themselves predatory. Institutions I believed would protect me have proven themselves both culpable and even dangerous. I have had to engage with the medical system with ultimate caution and discernment. I have had to teach my children this same caution and discernment while simultaneously trying to instill in them courage instead of fear. This balance sometimes feels impossible to communicate.

The truth is that abuse never happens inside a vacuum. David Farley was allowed to abuse women and children for decades because the systems in which he had power made it possible. Abuse in any form is systemic failure of the highest order. Even if Farley is incarcerated—which I hope and pray for every single day—that will not change the fact that the hospitals in which he practiced and the medical clinic which he founded enabled a predator. The institutions that, whether through negligence or active silencing, allowed Farley to remain practicing are just as responsible for the harm inflicted upon hundreds of women and children. To assert otherwise is ignorant at best and oppressive at worst.

Passing this bill would send the message to survivors everywhere in the state of Oregon that their lives and experiences matter, that maybe the system can change for the better. Writing this letter has pulled up my trauma all over again, but I do so to be a voice for those who cannot speak, who still suffer in the debilitating and disempowering aftermath of sexual assault. To see my abuser still participating in the world reignites the trauma I have worked so hard to heal; women and children survivors rarely see their abusers or the systems that enabled them see any form of justice, whether it be civil or criminal. For the state of Oregon to take survivors seriously enough to pass this bill will mean that this state will be on the right side of history. I love this state, and I love my community. Thank you for your time and for considering this bill that will be a step in the direction of reparation and healing.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Wilson

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