

Emerson Levy
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
House District 53



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 14, 2025

Chair Bowman, Co-Chairs Drazan and Pham, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today in strong support of HB 3582, which removes the statute of limitation for victims of sexual assault to file reports against their abusers or the entities that enabled abuse. As a legislator, attorney, mother, and woman, I believe our legal institutions should facilitate a reporting process that is victim-centered and trauma-informed.

If you yourself have not been a victim of sexual assault, statistics show you most likely know somebody who has. The feelings survivors experience are complicated and intense, especially when many institutions encourage victims to stay quiet or when the abuser is still in the victim's life. The current strict statutes of limitations do not always allow survivors adequate time to process and heal from their trauma. As a result, victims are forced to litigate before they are emotionally ready, and describe to a stranger(s), in excruciating detail, their most painful memories.

Additionally, having the same statute of limitations for children and adults is inequitable and uninformed. Children who have been assaulted lack the emotional intelligence to comprehend what happened to them, as well as the legal and medical language on how to discuss it. This creates an added layer of confusion, pain, and distrust in children who have experienced sexual assault. On the other hand, adult victims may lack a support system and/or experience societal shame or fear. This ambiguity in the current law creates added pressures for victims who are already experiencing trauma and does not value their unique experiences.

As I was reflecting on my own experience as an attorney, I realized much of my training was not victim-centered, nor are many of our laws here in Oregon. In the US, one in four women will experience sexual assault, and one in seven children face some sort of abuse. The average age of coming forward to report abuse is 52. These are alarming numbers, especially when we have more knowledge and language around sexual assault now than ever. I strongly believe the Oregon Legislature and Oregon Bar needs to ensure laws are centering the voices of victims and reflecting our values as a state.

I want to thank Representative Hartman for continuing to fight for survivors' justice and encouraging Oregon to join the many other states who are removing the statute of limitations for sexual abuse and making the reporting process for victims of sexual abuse more trauma-informed and survivor-focused.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emerson Levy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "E" and "L".

Emerson Levy

State Representative, HD53