



# Capitol Contact

by State Representative Steve Simon  
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## Justice for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

### THE CHILD VICTIMS ACT: NEW PROTECTIONS FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Dear Friends,  
One of my proudest legislative accomplishments this year is the passage of the Child Victims Act. After years of legislative struggle, this new law finally makes it easier for people who suffered sexual abuse as children to seek justice against their abuser or the institution that facilitated the abuse. I proudly teamed up with our state senator Ron Latz to author the legislation, which extends the statute of limitations so that more adults will at last have a day in court. When Governor Mark Dayton signed our bill into law, Minnesota's protections for these victims went from being considered among the weakest in the nation to the strongest.

*Steve*

State Representative  
**STEVE SIMON**

Capitol Office:  
473 State Office Building  
100 Martin Luther King  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
(651) 296-9889

Home: (952) 920-1611  
rep.steve.simon@house.mn  
www.house.mn/46B



Under old state law, as the result of a Minnesota Supreme Court decision, victims of childhood sex abuse could only file a lawsuit against their accusers until the age of 24. Because sex abuse is a crime of secrecy and shame, many survivors did not have the strength or courage to talk about their abuse until well past that age. In effect, the courthouse door was closed shut for the vast majority of victims.

The Child Victims Act removes the statute of limitations in the case of alleged sexual abuse of a child that may occur in the future. A lawsuit based on such abuse would apply against a person or entity that is the cause of harm to the victim.

The bill also provides a three-year "window" (from August 1, 2013 to August 1, 2016) for victims to make legal allegations that would otherwise be time-barred by the old statute of limitations. In all cases, institutions would only be liable if they are somehow at fault.

None of this progress would have been possible without the brave survivors who stepped forward to tell their personal stories, as well as the broad coalition of people and organizations that have been working for years to address barriers to justice for victims of childhood sexual abuse.



*As always, please feel free to contact me about any issue, idea, or concern.*