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House of Representatives  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 17, 2011

**TO:** ALL HOUSE MEMBERS

**FROM:** REPRESENTATIVE LOUISE WILLIAMS BISHOP *LWB*

**SUBJECT:** Co-sponsorship request – Amending the Statute of Limitations Law to provide for unlimited time to bring civil actions for serious criminal crimes committed

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In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation that would amend the current Statute of Limitations Law to further provide that there be no statute of limitations placed on those who wish to bring civil actions against perpetrators of serious criminal crimes such as childhood sexual abuse.

Currently, the law states that an individual is entitled to bring civil actions arising from childhood sexual abuse if they were under the age of 18 years old when the abuse occurred. After turning 18 years old the victim of the crime has a period of 12 years or up to the age of 50, in which they may commence a civil action for damages regardless of whether the individual files a criminal complaint regarding the sexual abuse.

In the past, it was required by law that a complaint of sexual abuse had to be reported in a timely manner, usually within one year of the offense. Thankfully many laws have changed. However, it is important to note that it often takes years for victims of abuse to come to terms with the abuse, build up the courage to report it, and pursue any action as the result of it; whether criminal or civil. The difficulty one must endure to report sexual abuse is astounding; but, it is absolutely necessary in the fight to eliminate this threat to children and adults alike.

It is for these reasons that I invite you to join me in my efforts to remove all Statutes of Limitations placed on those who wish to bring civil actions against their perpetrators. Help me to change the current law so that victims will have the comfort of knowing that they can take the time needed to gather the strength and the courage needed to pursue civil actions against those who have harmed them.

If you would like to join me in co-sponsoring this very important legislation, please contact Heather Walsh via email [hwalsh@pahouse.net](mailto:hwalsh@pahouse.net) or phone 783-2192. Thank you.