



March 14, 2024

Board of Directors:

Mariska Hargitay
Founder & President

Beth Armstrong
Chair

Kym Worthy
Vice Chair

Elizabeth Rice Grossman
Treasurer

Chauncey Parker
Secretary

Jessica Ambrose

Lauran Bromley

Cynthia Erivo

Kathryn Gallagher

Peter Hermann

Andrea McTamaney

Rev. Al Miles

Debbie Millman

Heather Mnuchin

Pamela Schein Murphy

Tom Nunan

Sarabeth Rees

Robin Renzi

Sophia Schrager

Amanda Stephens

Ali Wentworth

Rep. Tim Turner
State Capitol, 900 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Representative Turner,

The Joyful Heart Foundation strongly supports H.B.453, which would eliminate the statute of limitations to prosecute the crime of molestation of a juvenile

Sexual violence has a lifelong, profound impact on survivors. Studies show that most survivors disclose at an average of 52 years old, the median being 48 years old. Reporting for children may be even harder. Reasons for when and why survivors disclose vary for each individual, but often result from the mental and emotional ramifications of enduring such violence and abuse. Our laws must be responsive to the reality that surrounds this crime: it is difficult for survivors of sexual abuse, especially children, to come forward, and it may be decades before a survivor connects the life struggles they have with their abuse.

The elimination of criminal statute of limitations for child molestation is crucial for ensuring justice and protection for victims. By removing time constraints on prosecuting such heinous crimes, law enforcement can pursue perpetrators regardless of when the offense occurred, increasing accountability and preventing future harm to vulnerable children. This sends a clear message that society prioritizes the safety and well-being of its youngest members, fostering a culture where perpetrators of child molestation are never beyond the reach of justice. H.B.453, will keep the door open for a longer period to justice.

By enacting this piece of legislation, Louisiana will make it easier for survivors to obtain justice. The Joyful Heart Foundation thanks you for your efforts to bring justice and healing to all sexual assault survivors in Louisiana and stands ready to assist you in passing this bill.

Sincerely,

Mateo Cello

Policy Associate
Joyful Heart Foundation
m.cello@joyfulheartfoundation.org