



National Children's Alliance
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February 10, 2020

The Honorable Stephen G. Handy
1355 E 625 N
Layton, UT 84040

Re: HB 247 – Unlawful Sexual Activity Statute of Limitations Amendments – SUPPORT

Dear Representative Handy,

On behalf of National Children's Alliance, the close to 900 Children's Justice Centers and Children's Advocacy Centers throughout the US and the more than 351,000 victims of child abuse and child sex trafficking we serve, I write to thank you for introducing House Bill 247 – *Unlawful Sexual Activity Statute of Limitations Amendments*. National Children's Alliance supports any legislation aimed at removing barriers to justice for victims of child sexual abuse, and we believe that HB 247 is a step in the right direction.

National Children's Alliance is the member-accrediting body for Children's Justice Centers (CJCs) and Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs). CJCs/CACs are child-focused facilities in which multidisciplinary teams of law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical professionals, mental healthcare providers, and victim advocates coordinate their efforts to investigate and treat child abuse, while also holding offenders accountable. These centers provide forensic interviews, medical evaluations, trauma-focused mental healthcare and victim advocacy for victims of child abuse and child sexual exploitation. Last year, CJCs/CACs served more than 351,000 child abuse and trafficking victims nationally, and provided child abuse prevention education to more than 2 million individuals.

Because CJCs/CACs have been on the front lines in intervening and preventing child abuse and child exploitation for nearly 30 years, we know well what works to provide justice and healing. We also know that for a variety of reasons, many persons experiencing abuse during childhood do not disclose their abuse until well into adulthood, if ever at all. Narrow statutes of limitations are arbitrary barriers to justice that can prevent survivors from coming forward, allow perpetrators to go unpunishment, and stymie the healing process for survivors. As our society becomes more aware of these realities, legislation to

extend or eliminate statutes of limitations is being adopted across the country. We applaud your efforts in the state of Utah, and urge support for seeing HB 247 through to passage.

Child abuse is a far too common experience for America's children. And, while sadly, we may never be able to prevent all instances, we do know that with the appropriate response we can limit additional trauma, and improve outcomes by providing justice and walking children and families down a path towards healing. Therefore, we at National Children's Alliance fully support HB 247.

Thank you again for your support of this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Huizar', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Teresa Huizar
Executive Director
National Children's Alliance