

# City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia  
Office of the Chief Clerk  
Room 402, City Hall  
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 120234)

## RESOLUTION

Urging the Pennsylvania Legislature to take action on bills to protect victims of childhood sexual abuse.

WHEREAS, The real prevalence of child sexual abuse is not fully known because many victims do not disclose or report their abuse. It can take years and even decades for victims of childhood sexual abuse to confront and process what happened to them as children; and

WHEREAS, Even if the true prevalence of childhood sexual abuse is not fully known, adult retrospective studies show that 1 in 4 women and 1 and 6 men were sexually abused before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; and

WHEREAS, There are approximately 42 million adult survivors of child abuse in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's current statute of limitations requires victims of sexual abuse to file civil action against their perpetrator by their 30<sup>th</sup> birthday; and

WHEREAS, The consequences of childhood sexual abuse often follow victims into adulthood and most do not understand the effects of childhood sexual abuse are so pervasive in adult life; and

WHEREAS, There have been several bills introduced in the Pennsylvania Legislature to protect children from sexual abuse and would open the door for adults to initiate legal action against persons they claim sexually abused them when they were minors; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 832 introduced by Representative Louise Williams Bishop would repeal the statute of limitations in criminal and civil cases relating to child sexual abuse cases moving forward; and

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WHEREAS, House Bill 2050 introduced by Representatives Dennis O'Brien and Louise Williams Bishop provides a onetime two-year window in which victims can bring a civil action against an alleged abuser and the institution if the facility owed a duty of care to the victim and if the statute of limitations has expired; and

WHEREAS, Representative Michael McGeehan introduced House Bill 853 which establishes a two-year window for the filing of civil lawsuits in which the previous statute of limitations expired; and

WHEREAS, Representative Cherelle Parker introduced House Bill 1264 to allow the use of expert witnesses in sexual abuse cases; and

WHEREAS, Representatives O'Brien and Bishop introduced House Bill 2046 which requires staff of a public or private institution, school, facility or agency, to report acts of child abuse to law enforcement if the abuse was witnessed firsthand or abuse is suspected; and

WHEREAS, Representatives O'Brien and Bishop introduced House Bills 2047 and 2048 to increase the penalties for failure to report acts of child abuse and extends the statute of limitations for the criminal prosecution for failure to report abuse within three years of discovery; and

WHEREAS, The passage of these bills are needed to help protect the rights of childhood sex abuse victims; and now, therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council calls on the Pennsylvania Legislature to pass all the bills presented by the Philadelphia Delegation related to the protection of childhood sexual abuse victims.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-ninth of March, 2012.

Darrell L. Clarke  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Greenlee and O'Brien

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Greenlee, O'Brien, Jones, Reynolds Brown, Johnson, Henon, Goode, Quiñones Sánchez, Council President Clarke, Councilmembers Blackwell, Kenney, Squilla, Tasco, Bass, O'Neill and Oh