

Good morning chairman and committee. I thank you for hearing me regarding this important matter. Sexual assault and rape is a matter that I hold close to my heart, a subject that needs to be addressed. I come to this committee to urge you to abolish the statute of limitations for sexual assault. It's a small change for you to make, eliminating the 4 years, but a great achievement for victims.

As you know the statute of limitations only allows 4 years for a victim to report their sexual assault. The most common misconception is that a victim is prepared to call the police and file a report within minutes after he or she has been raped. Most victims are in disbelief; they feel ashamed, scared, paranoid, and at times suicidal.

A woman is 3 times more likely to suffer from depression after an assault, 6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol, 26 times more likely to abuse drugs, and 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide, according to the department of Justice.

But all these numbers and words can't give you any personal insight to what a rape victim have to deal with when he or she decides they are finally

ready to speak out. I watched my wife; who was under the impression she had a bad reaction to alcohol, fall apart when she found out it was really a methodical and devious plan to assault her. I watched her cry in disbelief, and I watched her slide into depression and anxiety. She was always a calm and cool person who changed into a woman who felt distant from me.

Things she found funny didn't make her laugh anymore. She changed.... and with my help and the support from friends and family, we worked with her to become strong again not only as my wife, but as the mother of our children. I honestly believed we would have our day in court, where she could look her assailant in the eyes and let him know, he didn't get away with it. He would be held accountable.

But that was not the case because I found out that there was a statute of limitations. This confused me. I have always had a strong belief in the justice system, and I believed that if someone raped you, or your wife, or your daughter or son, then that monster would be held accountable. Instead, the law allows the predator a get out of jail free card, and the ability to create new victims. The law should be in place to empower victims. Instead, it deters them from coming forward.

When my wife decided to come forward and tell her truth she was called a “whore, a slut, a tramp, and they said, she got what she deserved, I

bet he raped her good". The culture we live in, not only makes fun of sexual assault victims, but also tells them to be silent.

When I told my mother that Lise-Lotte, my wife, was going to come forward and tell the world publicly that she was assaulted, my mother told me to keep it in the family. Don't let everyone know what happened because she was worried about exposing our children to what society would have to say about it. I wondered why my mother would think this way; she's a strong woman. Then it hit me. My mother comes from the old school, the school where we are programmed by society to stay silent and to keep quiet about rape. Rape is neither glamorous nor subtle... It's a brutal act.... One that invades one's self.... This is an act that psychologically alters a victim's mind, and permanently changes that person's life.

Part of the reason why I hold this matter so close to my heart is because as a child I was sexually assaulted at the age of 13. Through my therapy and the devotion of my wife I was able to take a horrible experience and change it into a positive by working with Assemblywoman Irene Bustamante Adams to introduce a bill to change the statute of limitations. I'm here in front of this committee to tell you, this is what sexual assault looks like. It has taken me 25 years to come forward publicly and to talk openly about my assault. I have not told anyone outside of my wife and

therapist, and I have decided to share this with you because I have never felt more strongly about supporting an issue before.

The impact of rape on a families, siblings, neighborhoods, and the community is far more severe than you would expect, and yet the statute of limitations does not take into account the time that might be necessary for a victim to come forward. It took me 25 years to speak out, so how many other countless victims will come forward only to be silenced and discouraged by the statute of limitations?