

HCS HBs 1987 & 2185 -- STATUTES OF LIMITATION

SPONSOR: Ellington

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 8 to 1.

This bill specifies that there is no statute of limitation on any action for damages for personal injury caused to an individual by a person related to them within the third degree by blood or marriage who subjects the individual to sexual contact. Currently, there is a 10-year statute of limitation on this cause of action. Currently, prosecutions for unlawful sexual offenses involving a person 18 years of age or under must be commenced within 30 years after the victim reaches the age of 18. This bill specifies that such prosecutions or any prosecution for child abuse may be commenced at any time.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this would allow kids who have been victimized to come forward as adults, as it often takes time to be able to deal with childhood sexual abuse. We have to think about the psychological effect of childhood sexual abuse when we consider eliminating the statutes of limitation for these cases. Short statutes of limitation end up helping abusers. There are many states that have fully eliminated civil and criminal statutes of limitation for this kind of abuse.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Ellington; Missouri Coalition Against Domestic And Sexual Violence; and Missouri Kids First.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.