Testimony Submitted to:
New Mexico State Legislature

In support of:
Reforming New Mexico's Civil Statute of Limitations for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Friday, November 6, 2026

Dear New Mexico State Legislature,

We are writing in strong support of legislation to reform New Mexico's civil statute of limitations for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. As survivors of Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell's abuse and trafficking, we know firsthand how difficult it can be to come forward, seek justice, and hold powerful perpetrators and the institutions that protect them accountable. This legislation recognizes a fundamental truth: **seeking justice should not come with an expiration date.**

For many of us, the abuse we experienced at the hands of Jeffrey Epstein was not the first time we had been sexually abused. For several survivors, the exploitation began in early childhood. Childhood sexual abuse does not end when the abuse stops. Its effects can follow survivors for years, shaping how they understand what happened to them, how they process their experiences, and when they feel safe enough to speak about them. Research estimates that 55 to 70 percent of people who experience childhood sexual abuse do not disclose until adulthood.[1] For many, shame, fear, manipulation, and the belief that what happened was somehow their fault make it extraordinarily difficult to come forward.

In Epstein's case, additional barriers existed. He was extraordinarily wealthy, surrounded by powerful and influential people, and used his resources to intimidate, manipulate, and silence us. Many survivors feared that coming forward would put them at risk, that no one would believe them, or that the people and institutions with the power to protect them would instead protect him. Those fears were not unfounded. The sweetheart deal Epstein received, and the failures of the institutions responsible for investigating and prosecuting his crimes, demonstrated just how profoundly the criminal justice system can fail survivors. For some of us, that betrayal reinforced a deep mistrust of the very systems that were meant to protect us.

Survivors should not be punished for the time it takes to understand what happened to them, find the courage to speak about it, or feel safe enough to pursue accountability. We do not all come to terms with our experiences on the same timeline. Some survivors are ready to speak out years later; others need decades. Some are only beginning to recognize the extent of the abuse they experienced in adolescence as adults. A statute of limitations should never be the reason they are denied the opportunity to seek justice.

This legislation takes meaningful steps toward addressing that injustice. **By extending the civil statute of limitations for childhood sexual abuse claims through age 58, it recognizes that the opportunity to**

[1] Lucy McGill & Rosaleen McElvaney, "Adult and Adolescent Disclosures of Child Sexual Abuse: A Comparative Analysis," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (2023), https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221088278. The authors cite research estimating that 55–70% of individuals who experience childhood sexual abuse delay disclosure until adulthood (London et al., 2008).

pursue justice should not be limited by arbitrary deadlines. It also recognizes that accountability must extend beyond individual perpetrators to the institutions that enabled abuse and failed to protect survivors.

New Mexico has a particular responsibility to address the legacy of abuse connected to Jeffrey Epstein's Zorro Ranch, located in Santa Fe County. Allegations of sexual abuse and trafficking at the ranch, the closure of the state's original investigation in 2019 at the request of federal prosecutors, and the subsequent fight for access to federal investigative records raise serious questions about how survivors were failed and how accountability was delayed. New Mexico residents have also come forward describing abuse connected to the ranch. This history is especially significant in a state where 27% of women report that their first experience of sexual violence occurred before age 18.[2] This history makes clear why survivors must have meaningful opportunities to pursue civil claims against those responsible, including institutions that enabled or failed to prevent abuse.

By extending the time survivors have to bring claims, this legislation gives survivors a meaningful opportunity to seek accountability that would otherwise be denied to them. New Mexico should ensure that the passage of time does not shield perpetrators and institutions from answering for the harm they caused.

For decades, powerful people have counted on survivors staying silent, but we refuse. New Mexico has an opportunity to stand with us and all survivors by recognizing our right to be heard, our right to seek accountability, and our right to pursue justice on our own timeline.

We urge you to support this legislation and ensure that survivors are never again denied their day in court simply because too much time has passed.

Sincerely,

Andrea Sterling	Jane Doe	Lisa Phillips	Wendy Pesante
Annie Farmer	Jane Doe	Liz Stein	
Anouska De Georgiou	Jane Doe	Marijke Chartouni	
Ashley Rubright	Jena-Lisa Jones	Marina Lacerda	
Audra Lynn Fasano	Jess Michaels	Rachel Benavidez	
Chauntae Davies	Joanna Harrison	Sharlene Rochard	
Dani Bensky	Juliette Bryant	Sky and Amanda Roberts	
Jane Doe	Lara Blume McGee	Teresa J. Helm	

[2] Johns Hopkins Bloomberg American Health Initiative, *New Mexico Gender-Based Violence State Brief* (reporting data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2016/2017).