

The New York State Assembly Passes the Adult Survivors Act

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On May 24th, 2022, the Adult Survivors Act was signed into law by Gov. Kathy Hochul after passing in the New York State Assembly a day prior. The Adult Survivors Act was passed unanimously in the Senate for the second time on April 26th but was finally signed into law after multiple unsuccessful past attempts.

Originally introduced in 2021 by State Sen. Brad Hoylman (D-Manhattan), the bill creates a one-year lookback period for victims of sexual assault in New York to file a civil suit against their assaulter. The bill is modeled after the Child Victims Act, which extended the statute of limitations to allow for child victims to sue as adults.

Often, fears of retaliation, shame or disruption prevent sexual assault survivors from coming forward. By extending the statute of limitations for adults, the new legislation gives survivors more time to mentally and strategically prepare to sue their abusers, as well as potentially suing the institution where the abuse occurred.

The passage in the Assembly came after multiple emotional testimonies from adult survivors, including two members of the assembly. Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas from Queens spoke of her assault for the first time in support of the bill.

"Twenty-five years ago, at the age of 21, I was raped," she said. "I've never said that out loud before."

Steps have been taken in New York to support assault victims like Gonzalez-Rojas in the past, such as the extension of the statute of limitations from 3 to 20 years back in 2019, but the current measure provides even more sweeping provisions to make sure that no one is unable to seek legal recourse. Bill sponsor Linda Rosenthal took to the floor to usher in a new era of sexual assault discourse.

"With this vote today, the Assembly signals that it is part of the change that we need," she said. "It is part of a movement to right historic wrongs that for too long have blamed survivors and forced them into the shadows."

Forbes

"Statute Of Limitations On Sexual Assault Eliminated For One Year In New York Following Passage Of The Adult Survivors Act"

May 25, 2022

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