

How Wigdor LLP Led the Charge on Lawsuits Filed Under the Adult Survivors Act

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With the Adult Survivors Act, or ASA, expiring in November 2023, Wigdor quickly recognized the law as an important factor in our litigation strategy. Wigdor LLP has actively utilized the ASA to advocate for survivors of gender-based sexual violence. In 2024 alone, the firm litigated 12 matters under the ASA (and confidentially settled many more), which intended to hold perpetrators of sexual assault accountable for their misconduct and help victims find closure.

To start, what *is* the ASA? The Adult Survivors Act [offered](#) victims of sexual assault and harassment in New York a one-year window for civil claims against their abusers that would otherwise be blocked by the statute of limitations. Covering a broad range of sexual offenses, including rape, sexual abuse, and other related crimes, the ASA may be accessed as long as the victim was 18 or older when the crime occurred. This lookback window addressed the common delay in victims coming forward with their accounts of abuse, due to shame or fear of retaliation.

Where have you seen the ASA in practice?

The ASA was largely cited in cases against Sean Combs, and as the criminal trial against him begins this week, it is a law that will likely be referenced in the courtroom. As the act approached its expiration date, a flurry of complaints was filed, many against highly recognized celebrities including actor Russell Brand and music executive L.A. Reid. However, big names weren't the only target of allegations that called upon the ASA. Many lawsuits were filed against the state of New York, New York City and local counties on charges of abuse at prisons and jails. With more than 2,500 complaints filed under the law,

Wigdor leaned heavily on the protections offered by the ASA, as exemplified by matters like Casandra Ventura v. Sean Combs, Julia Ormond's v. Harvey Weinstein, Disney, Miramax, and CAA, and Sara Ziff v. Weinstein.

Wigdor leveraged the broad scope of the law

The ASA permitted survivors to file claims against the specific individual who committed the abuse, but it also opened the door for lawsuits against the organizations that enabled the abuse. The breadth of the law increased survivors' access to justice by offering more than one path. Matters have been filed against institutions, including hospitals, schools, and correctional facilities, alleging negligence in preventing or addressing sexual abuse. Recognizing this, Wigdor aims to hold accountable all those who played a role in allowing heinous misconduct to occur. In a precedent-setting matter, Wigdor is taking those monolithic entities like CAA to task for their knowledge of – and failure to prevent – Harvey Weinstein's sexual harassment of actress Julia Ormond.

Lasting impact of the ASA

When matters against major public figures like Sean Combs and Harvey Weinstein generated significant press, Wigdor saw an influx of victims coming forward with their own allegations against previously lauded leaders of the entertainment industry.

Wigdor Founding Partner Douglas Wigdor told [USA Today](#):

"I think that our case, involving Sean Combs, really got a lot of publicity. And people read about the Adult Survivors Act, and I think that provided impetus for people to come forward even though there were only a few days to do so. And so, my hope is that at some point, they'll extend the ASA again, which is a possibility. And so that way other people can come forward."

The lawsuit filed against Combs, filed by Wigdor LLP on behalf of Casandra Ventura, was the first to be filed under the Adult Survivors Act and the Gender Motivated Violence Act. The matter was met with overwhelming support from both the public and legal industry and resolved in a single day, ushering in a new wave of allegations from other victims who no longer felt being silenced was a foregone conclusion. The media attention garnered by this landmark case helped remove the stigma around sexual assault and empowered victims to come forward, thereby exposing the true extent of the ubiquitous nature of such crimes in the entertainment industry.

What's next for the ASA?

The ASA may have expired (as has the similar New York City [Gender Motivated Violence Act](#)), victims still have avenues to seek justice. The California Sexual Abuse and Cover-Up Accountability Act, for claims occurring between 2009 and 2019, does not expire until 2026 and allows victims to continue to demand justice in a state that serves as a hub for the entertainment and sports industries, both of which arguably see higher rates of abuse.

Additionally, with the outpouring of support for victims who bravely shared their stories raising awareness of the issue, there is hope that the ASA may be extended and that other states may adopt similar legislation. Douglas Wigdor noted the potential for other industries to follow the model of the ASA in relevant geographical areas, like Washington, DC: "I don't think politicians should be immune from these sorts of cases," he shared with USA Today. As many lawsuits were only possible due to the ASA, Wigdor hopes the resulting success will lead to overarching policy reform in workplaces and public organizations, helping prevent future abuse.

Wigdor is committed to helping victims heal from sexual assault. If you are interested and ready to explore legal action against gender-based violence you have experienced, you may reach out to us at 212-257-6800 or contact@wigdorlaw.com.

Additional resources may be found at:

- [RAINN](#)



- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)
- [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#)
- [Safe Horizon](#)