

Once again, Good Morning Mr. Chairman and members of the House Judiciary Committee.

My name is Austen Schauer, representing West Fargo, District 13.

House Bill 1387 comes before you today seeking to **extend** the Statute of Limitations in three areas:

- 1. The surgical alteration of the genitals of a female minor or otherwise known as FGM.**
- 2. Felonies other than murder.**
- 3. Sexual abuse of minors.**

As you know, the statute of limitations ends **ALL** legal rights after a certain amount of time.

It is a deadline set by the legal system for victims to bring their case forward.

It is a deadline that perpetrators welcome knowing they will not be held accountable.

But should there be a deadline on justice?

Should the one who committed awful crimes be saved by the clock?

Or should that deadline be **extended** to give victims and their families the opportunity to seek justice?

On January 4th of this year, the North Dakota Attorney General announced the results of an 18-month investigation into allegations of child sexual abuse by two living priests.

They found **extensive** evidence but because of Statute of Limitations, too much time had passed for prosecution.

On September 1st, 2016, authorities in Paynesville, MN found the body of 11-year-old **Jacob Wetterling**.

Jacob had been kidnapped, molested, and killed in 1989.

After 27 years, the man who committed this crime confessed but because of Statute of Limitations, authorities were prevented from pursuing charges.

Later, the killer cut a deal with prosecutors for taking investigators to the body. He was convicted on **one count** of child pornography.

House Bill 1387 calls for an extension of the statute of limitations for FGM from three years to 10 years; (page one, line 23 and page 2, line 1).

For Felonies, **HB 1387** calls for an extension of SOLs from three to seven years (page 2 lines 7,8,9 and 10).

HB 1387 also calls for SOLs to be extended from three years to ten years in the prosecution of sexual abuse of minors. (Page 2, lines 20 and 25).

Mr. Chairman, a perpetrator can escape criminal prosecution by watching the clock.

The question is, can a victim escape the emotional and psychological damage by watching the clock?

Mr. Chairman, we have several people willing to testify on **HB 1387**, but I am open to any questions to or your committee may have.