

New York's New Child Victims Act Expands Opportunity for Filing Abuse Claims and The Path for Victims' Justice

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This week, a one-year “revival” period of statute of limitations began for individuals who assert civil claims of child abuse to file claims against institutions and individuals pursuant to New York’s Child Victims Act, even if those claims had already expired and/or were dismissed because [they were filed late](#). The premise behind the Child Victims Act is that children are often prevented from disclosing abuse due to the social, psychological and emotional trauma they experience.

Additionally, the Child Victims Act, also expands the statute of limitations for bringing criminal claims against alleged perpetrators of child sexual abuse, and permits alleged victims of these crimes to file civil lawsuits up until they reach age 55. This aspect of the legislation will have a significant impact on the volume of criminal cases, and even more so civil lawsuits, [385 of which were filed in the first hours of the revival period, with hundreds more geared up for filing in the upcoming weeks and months](#). Indeed, the New York State court system has set aside 45 judges specifically to handle the expected crush of cases.

Institutional Changes Following the New Child Victim’s Act

Religious, educational and other institutions that are committed to providing a safe environment for children should be thinking about how they can implement safeguards against child abuse within their institutions. An important step is keeping internal lines of communication with staff and families open, as well as educating staff and leadership as to their reporting obligations under [New York law](#) and on how to provide appropriate support if child abuse is suspected.

[The Child Victims Act joins the Sex Harassment Bill](#) also signed into law by Gov. Cuomo as significant changes by New York Legislators involving sexual abuse and harassment in New York State.

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