



320 7th Avenue, #161
Brooklyn, New York 11215
(212) 475-2026
joyfulheartfoundation.org

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March 7, 2022

Kansas Senate Committee on Judiciary
Room 346-S Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

The Joyful Heart Foundation strongly supports House Bill 2574, a bill that would expand sexual assault survivors' access to victim compensation. Giving survivors more time to file for compensation is a trauma-informed and victim centered practice.

The Joyful Heart Foundation's [mission](#) is to transform society's response to sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse, support survivors' healing, and end this violence forever. Since 2010, Joyful Heart has made the elimination of the rape kit backlog—hundreds of thousands of untested rape kits across the nation—our top priority. In this work, we have interacted with countless survivors whose rape kits have been tested at a later date and have been asked to interact with the criminal justice system that had failed them in the first place.

Many survivors of sexual assault and abuse suffer from mental health conditions including depression, PTSD, and anxiety, among others. Anger, fear, guilt, shame, embarrassment, hyper-vigilance and other reactions are common post-assault. These feelings can also surface years or decades later if a survivor is compelled to testify in a sexual predator hearing or is notified of a DNA identification of the offender due to testing of a backlogged rape kit or other delay. In cases where the survivor's kit was not tested until a later date and it matched to an offender, those survivors should not be cut off from support just due to the passage of time.

Mental health treatment is important to survivors' healing and well-being. These events covered in this bill necessitate an expanded approach to compensation. Counseling can help survivors address the trauma from the assault, support them on their path to healing, and help them rebuild their lives.

Joyful Heart also encourages the legislature to consider in future sessions removing other barriers to victim compensation including other application deadlines and requirements for sexual assault survivors to report the crime to law enforcement, something that $\frac{3}{4}$ of survivors don't feel comfortable doing.

Sexual assault survivors deserve to receive victim compensation after they are asked to re-engage with the criminal justice process years or decades after the assault. We encourage the committee to pass HB2547 and move it to the full Senate for consideration. The Joyful Heart Foundation stands ready to assist you in your efforts to bring justice and healing to sexual assault survivors.

With gratitude,

Ilse Knecht

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ilse Knecht". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Ilse" and "Knecht" being capitalized and prominent.

Director, Policy and Advocacy
Joyful Heart Foundation
(212) 475-2026
i.knecht@joyfulheartfoundation.org