

Written by Rep. Mike Smiddy  
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PORT BYRON, IL – A measure co-sponsored by state Rep. Mike Smiddy (D-Hillsdale) to prevent child sex offenders from escaping prosecution won the approval of the Illinois House last week, in time for the recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness month in April.

“People who commit these terrible crimes against children should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law – not allowed to slide by because a few years have passed,” said Smiddy. “This is especially important when you consider how many child victims are scared to report the crimes, unsure if a crime has occurred, or simply afraid to report someone they know and should trust. This legislation gives child victims of the worst kind of sexual crimes the ability to seek justice when they are ready to face their abuser.”

In general, current law requires crimes to be prosecuted within three years for felony charges and within 1.5 years for misdemeanor charges, although some extensions already exist for sex crimes against minors. House Bill 1063 would eliminate the statute of limitations for certain sex crimes committed against a minor, including criminal sexual assault, aggravated sexual abuse, and predatory criminal sexual assault of a child.

“We are committed to ending the suffering of sexual assault victims and holding sex offenders accountable for their crimes,” said Lyn Schollett, general counsel for the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. “Children who have been victimized by sexual violence experience unimaginable trauma. Sex offenders often prevent child victims from reporting the crime by blaming or threatening the child. This bill will ensure that when a survivor of childhood sexual abuse is safe enough to report the crime, prosecutors can stand ready to charge the offender.”

House Bill 1063 will move to the Senate for consideration. For more information, contact Smiddy’s constituent services office at RepSmiddy@gmail.com, (309) 848-9098, or toll-free at (855) 243-4988.

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