02/17/2020

I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak today in support of SB 162.

My name is Hazel Nicole and I live in Washington County, Ohio. I was born on

April 28, 1996 at Marietta Memorial Hospital, but I was raised in West Virginia my

whole childhood. I am 23 years old and I am a survivor of child sexual abuse by my

stepfather.

My birth name was Sherlyn Eden, but in 2016, I legally changed my name due to

my abuser hurting me my whole life and abusing my name also. I do not like to

hear that name called; it reminds me of him.

In April 2016, I was suicidal and checked into a behavioral health clinic, I took my

KJV Holy Bible with me and while I was in the center for a week, I read the entire

book of Psalms and fasted and prayed, and asked the Lord to help me talk about

the sexual abuse I had been suffering from for so many years.

After coming home from the clinic, I filed child sexual abuse charges with the WV

State Police against my stepfather. My family and I checked into a domestic

violence and sexual assault shelter in Marietta, Ohio out of fear for our life. My

abuser had screamed at me for years, telling me if I ever told anyone what he was

doing to me, he would kill my mom, me, and my family.

I was sexually abused by from age 5 to almost age 20. I was in fear for my life

every single day of my life all those years. Physically beat, held down, pushed,

repeatably slapped to the face.

Almost immediately after my mother and siblings and I got away from him in

2012, and my mom got a divorce from him, he was granted supervised visits that

took place with a lady that went to the church my mom took us to when we were

growing up. He whispered in my ear, and told me he wanted a key to my mom’s

apt. and that if I did not let him make a copy of it, he was going to kill me and my

mom, and he got the key as I was scared to death as I had always been.

One time he pointed a gun to my head and kept it on my head the entire time he

was sexually assaulting me, I did not know if it was loaded or not, and repeatably

kept saying “I’m going to kill you, I’m going to kill you, I’m going to kill you”, next

thing I remember he was gone, as I lay froze in my bed, scared to death, I finally

got out of my bed, went to my phone and called my mom, I wanted to tell her so

bad, but could not bring myself to tell her. My mom, her boyfriend, and my little

sister was at the ocean in Florida.

Another time I was threatened with a knife to my throat by him, at least two

different times this happened, he threatened to slice my throat if I said anything

to anyone about what he was doing to me.

One time after he came inside my mom’s apt. to abuse me when nobody was

home, he said, “Tonight I am going to kill you” and when he was hurting me, he

put his hands around my neck strangled me and chocked me out. I passed out,

when I woke up, he was gone.

He always told me for years that he was going to replace me with my little sister

and that he was going to get rid of my brother. I believed he was going to do what

he said he was going to do. I witnessed him strangle my brother to the point his

face was beat red, and I thought he was going to die, my mom was at work. It was

shortly after that attack, that my mom was able to get us away from him and free

from abuse, so I thought.

The abuse never stopped until I wanted to harm myself to get away from him in

April 2016. I got help and told on him. He has hurt me so much. It affects me

every single day. My body hurts. I feel different. I have so many health issues. I

take so much medicine. I do not want the crime of “Rape” to happen to anyone

else.

I took my voice to the West Virginia capitol in March 2019 in support of **SB 72**

**creating sexual assault victims bill of rights**, my mom and I spoke with Delegate

Vernon Criss, he proposed an amendment to the bill, adding that the bill shall be

further referred to as being called “Hazel’s Law” after me and everyone voted

“YES” and it passed through the House of Delegates to the Senate, to the

Governor’s desk and became law in June 2019.

If you only remember one thing that I said today, please remember “I am not

nobody but “I AM SOMEBODY”.

Please, allow every man and woman to have a voice, **support SB 162 which would**

**eliminate the statute of limitations on rape and remove the spousal exemptions**

**on rape**.

God Bless All Survivors

Hazel Nicole

Survivor