

The vote on HB3582 was unanimous. I voted yes as well, but there are potential concerns which I have been worrying about since the vote.

Trials are not always perfect. Jury trials work very well, but juries do get things wrong. A trial conducted decades after the crime will necessarily suffer from far less available evidence. This is especially true if no accusation was made until many years later. If the primary evidence is provided by testimony from the victim and possibly a few friends, it becomes a question of how convincing the testimony is.

A trial conducted within even a few years of serious crime will lead to better results. Details of the statements from the accuser can be more easily checked.

It is well known that some attorneys are far more effective at swaying juries than others. This has to do with how well they present evidence, but they are also actors too and the better actors are more successful.

Do we want trials conducted decades after the crime to depend on the acting ability of the victim who is expecting to receive a large financial settlement if they are successful? This concern is unfair to real victims, but it can easily happen.

What happens when an individual, realizing that they and maybe a friend or two, can make millions of dollars in a civil trial by simply lying convincingly about events from the distant past? Unfortunately, there are plenty of people who would be willing to misuse the system in this way.

Statutes of limitations are there for a reason. It is far easier to corroborate testimony with real events that happened 5 years ago than in the much more distant past.

Involvement in sexual abuse of children is a horrific crime, which is why the passage of this bill was unanimous. I am worried, however, that these changes could open up the door to false claims which destroy innocent individuals who either did nothing wrong or had no idea a crime was occurring but are convicted based on the idea that they should have known.

Hopefully, the judges and juries involved in future cases will exercise extreme caution.