

**§ 2515. No Limit for Child Sexual Abuse.**

(a) Any claim arising from an incident of child sexual abuse may be commenced against a person, a legal entity, abusers, their enablers, their aiders or abettors, those acting in concert with them and their institutions at any time.

(b) Any claim arising from an incident of child sexual abuse that occurred in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands which has been barred by virtue of the expiration of the previous civil statute of limitations shall be permitted to be filed in any court of competent jurisdiction.

**Source:** PL 22-12, § 2 (Nov. 10, 2021).

**Commission Comment:** *Legislative Findings of 2021 Legislation.*— In addition to a severability provision, PL 22-12 included the following Findings and Purpose section:

Section 1. Findings and Purpose.

The Legislature finds that sexual crimes committed against persons under the age of eighteen (18) are very sensitive cases that can severely traumatize young victims. Often times, these incidents are left unreported due to the victim's fear of revealing such disturbing information, threats made by the abuser, or familial connections of the abuser.

The Legislature finds that for many child victims, the trauma itself prevents them from coming forward earlier. As adults, victims may not connect the assault to its long-lasting impact until they seek therapeutic help years later, often referred to as delayed discovery. Delayed discovery is a result of emotional or psychological trauma that is often accompanied with repression in a person's memory that the abuse actually took place, in which the psychological injuries are not realized until adulthood after undergoing counseling or therapy. Many of the injuries associated with childhood sexual abuse do not manifest themselves until much later in life.

The Legislature further finds that criminal prosecution is not barred by a statute of limitation and prosecution may be pursued at any time for a case in which an adult discovers that he or she was a victim of sexual abuse as a child under the age of eighteen. The criminal prosecution option remains open regardless of the passage of time pursuant to 6 CMC § 107(a). However, the same option is not available for civil cases involving sexual abuse of victims that occurred when they were under 18 years of age; however, such victims realized or discovered the sexual abuse during their adulthood after more than 6 six [sic] years have elapsed. This type of case, if pursued through civil litigation, is barred by the current six-years statute of limitation under 7 CMC § 2505.

The Legislature finds that the expiration of the applicable statute of limitations for child sexual abuse victims during this period resulted in barring many meritorious civil claims. This has allowed many child sexual abusers to escape civil liability. If evidence is sufficient to prove civil liability, the mere passage of time should not prevent child sexual abuse victims from seeking justice.

**TITLE 7: CIVIL PROCEDURE**  
**DIVISION 2: ACTIONS AND SPECIAL PROCEEDINGS**

Furthermore, eliminating the time limitation for civil actions involving sexual abuse of minors will prove to be beneficial for it will give the victims, regardless of age and duration since the alleged incident, the opportunity to build their confidence and report such incidents knowing that they can begin at any time regardless of the time duration since the victim reached the age of eighteen (18) and still be made whole. Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to amend Title 7 of the Commonwealth Code to add a new section to authorize civil claims for child sexual abuse to be commenced at any time.