

February 17<sup>th</sup> 2021

Dear Committee chair and members,

I honestly have no idea how to start this letter without showing my pain and anger for the events that has happened to me continue to happen to others.

In the community in which I live there are multiple cases that aren't prosecuted. The victims of those crimes, including myself, are all denied justice. My case was quietly investigated and not prosecuted. I experienced trauma from the systemic oppression of professionals not doing their jobs correctly.

Due to this it was difficult to find my voice to describe the things that happened to me. It was too hard for me to actually describe. Articulating it in words was impossible. It wasn't until two years after the sexual assaults, when I became a victim advocate, that I truly understood the significance of the damage done to me, and all of the laws that were broken. As a victim of sexual assault, multiple times throughout my life, the most painful experience ended in a forced relationship. I was 15 years old, a minor. He was 19 when he told me **"Now remember you wanted this, you raped me."** That relationship continued. However, so did the grooming, forced sexual assault, coercion, and my lack of consent. I was not allowed to say no. He would tell me that **"he owned my body."** I was dependent on him for my home, housing and financial support. We had children together – they were also my concern. It's just SEX right? Wrong! When I finally got out, I continued to experience significant damage and trauma from the sexual assaults that I experienced during and the relationship, along with some significant felony stalking.

I was informed the other day that the CSC Statutory work group's focus was to help survivors that the laws could not currently help. That one was a tough one for me to swallow. I got the short end of the stick. My case was the kind of a case that would be used as a sacrificial lamb. It is ridiculous that things like I experienced ever happened to me or others in my community before people started doing anything about it.

My experience isn't unique. This happens to a lot of people. I had to make decisions to keep myself and my children safer that made it less likely I would receive justice from the criminal justice system.

I don't think this for bill is perfect. However, it's a start. If nothing changes nothing changes and everything that happened to me was worth nothing, it would mean nothing! There are real, significant impacts and damage that happens to someone who is sexually assaulted – more than many people can ever realize. I've six years of therapy, working on the learned inability to trust anybody. I can't build healthy relationships. I'm so angry and beaten down. None of that compares to the fact that it continues to happen to others. Society continues to look the other way because they don't understand the significance of the trauma that people have been harmed continue to experience.

I never received the justice I deserved to have, and it is very possible that my perpetrator is doing the same to others. Therefore, I urge you not to take the Criminal Sexual Conduct Statutory Reform Work Group Report and House File 707 report lightly. Look through it thoroughly, understand the significance of it. Do your part as the representatives to help protect the citizens who've experienced crimes such as sexual violence. Do your due diligence, and don't let what happened to me happen to others.

Sincerely,

An Anonymous person with a vested interest.