

Roberta DiMezza

From: Lisa Eddington <lisaeddington@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 4, 2025 2:36 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee; Roberta DiMezza
Subject: Bill 5177 Harters law

Hi my name is Lisa Harter Pettit,

I am testifying today to get Harters law bill hb5177 passed. If passed this bill will extend the statute of limitations for felony child abuse in Rhode Island.

Sadly I know how important this bill is.

I was physically, emotionally abused, was used as a slave and tortured. Some of the abuse my brother and I suffered was duct tape over our mouths every single day so we would not speak. Being overfed by my stepmother. She would count each chew of my food. I couldn't chew each bite more than 20 times or take more than 20 minutes to eat.

My stepmother would make me eat so much food that I would have to throw up. She would make me throw up on my plate and eat my own throw up while continuously beating me and screaming at me.

I had to sleep in the basement with rats crawling on me.

She timed all of my chores around the house and would ridicule and beat me if I went over her unreasonable time limits for chores.

My brother and I were not allowed to bathe for months at a time. We stunk and had dirty clothes. We were the most made fun of kids in school.

My father let all of this and so much more happen to us.

My stepmother did know how to be a good parent, her two children (my stepbrother and stepsister) had beautiful clothes and the best of everything. While I was forced to quit school at 16 and give them all the money I made. There were no good or normal days for my brother and I, abuse was an everyday occurrence for us.

We were also not allowed to have any friends, participate in school activities or have any contact with my birth mother's family so they would not see the abuse.

All while my stepsister Monique went to Saint Xavier high school and to Switzerland for college.

In my experience it takes years even decades to not blame ourselves and be strong enough to face our abuser in court.

I have anxiety, panic attacks, PTSD and nightmares still because of the abuse I suffered at the hands of my father and stepmother.

My sister Lori turned to drugs and died of an overdose not being able to deal with or forget the horrible memories of abuse.

Please pass this law in Rhode Island. And help survivors of felony child abuse have time to heal so they can take their abusers to court.