



Delaware House of Representatives House Majority Caucus

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HOUSE PASSES BILL ALLOWING CIVIL SUITS AGAINST HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS FOR SEXUAL ABUSE

HB 326 would create two-year 'look-back' provision for civil suits

DOVER – Legislation that would allow victims who are sexually abused by a health care provider to file suit any time after the abuse took place passed the House on Tuesday.

Sponsored by House Majority Leader Rep. Peter C. Schwartzkopf, Rep. John C. Atkins and Rep. Helene M. Keeley, House Bill 326 is modeled after Delaware's Child Victim's Act, which was passed in 2007. That legislation eliminated the civil statute of limitations for sexual abuse of children. Like the 2007 legislation, House Bill 326 would create a two-year "look-back" provision for sexual abuse victims to file a civil suit.

The legislation comes at a time when Lewes pediatrician Earl Bradley has been charged with hundreds of counts of sexually abusing his young patients. The case has left many Sussex County families worried and concerned about the safety of their children.

"The allegations of sexual abuse by Dr. Bradley have horrified many of us throughout the state," said Rep. Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach. "These are unspeakable crimes that in my 25-year career with the Delaware State Police, I have never seen before, and hope I never see again. While we can't undo what has happened, we can make sure that these and any other victims who are sexually abused by a health care provider can seek legal action."

HB 326 moves to the Senate for consideration.

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