



SAFE Child Act

The Sexual Assault Fast reporting and Enforcement Act, or the SAFE Child Act, is new legislation to protect children from abuse in our communities and online. The legislation, drafted and supported by Attorney General Josh Stein, is sponsored by Sens. Danny Britt, Kathy Harrington, and Jay Chaudhuri, and Reps. John Faircloth, Dennis Riddell, and Brian Turner.

This legislation will:

Expand the Duty to Report Child Abuse

- ✓ **Reporting.** Requires any person or organization to report all reasonably suspected child abuse. Currently, it is only mandatory to report child abuse when the abuser is in a parental role and in a residential setting. This does not include adults who may supervise children outside the home, such as a coaches, camp counselors, clergy members, or youth leaders. The SAFE Child Act closes this loophole by requiring people and institutions to report child abuse to local law enforcement regardless of the abuser's relationship with the child.

Extend the Statute of Limitations to Bring an Action for Child Abuse

- ✓ **Criminal.** Increases the statute of limitations to 10 years for misdemeanor child abuse. A prosecutor will have up to 10 years after the date of incident to bring a misdemeanor criminal action against an abuser. Those crimes include battery on an unborn child, sexual battery, disclosure of private images, indecent liberties with a child, and misdemeanor child abuse. Currently, misdemeanor actions can only be brought two years after the date of incident; there is no statute of limitations for felonies.
- ✓ **Civil.** Increases the statute of limitations to age 50. A person who was sexually abused under the age of 18 will have until the age of 50 to bring a civil action against the abuser. Any person who was originally time-barred under the old statute of limitations would have one year to commence an action under the new law.

Protect Children Online from Predators

- ✓ **Barring High-Risk Sex Offenders.** Protects children online by barring high-risk sex offenders, such as sexually violent predators, from contacting minors using social media or social networking sites.

Improve Prosecutorial Tools

- ✓ **Investigative Grand Jury.** Allows a prosecutor to use an investigative grand jury to investigate claims of child abuse. By doing this, prosecutors would have the ability to question witnesses under oath, subpoena records, and compel sworn testimony from witnesses who otherwise might refuse to cooperate. These tools are essential when investigating institutionalized criminal abuse.