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ALLEGED VICTIMS OF CONVICTED CHILD MOLESTOR PEDIATRICIAN JOHNNIE BARTO FILE FIRST LAWSUIT AND CALL FOR PASSAGE OF SB 540

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania – Former patients of convicted pedophile pediatrician, Dr. Johnnie Barto announced the filing of a lawsuit against Conemaugh Health Systems, Laurel Pediatrics and Johnnie Barto. These are the first lawsuits filed since Barto was convicted of 69 counts of aggravated indecent assault, indecent assault, and endangering the welfare of children and sentenced to up to 158 years in prison. [Click Here for Lawsuit](#)

The lawsuit alleges that during medical exams at the Laurel Pediatric Clinic, Barto groped and fondled the breasts and genitals of his young patients under the guise of performing examinations. The children were aged 8, 10, 11, 13 and 16 at the time of the alleged assaults. None of them went to Barto for treatment of their breasts or genitals.

The women were joined at a Harrisburg news conference by other Barto survivors and State Senator Katie Muth , a sponsor of SB 540, a bill which would eliminate the statute of limitations for sexual offenses and open a window for civil liability. The bill has been endorsed by Attorney General Josh Shapiro who led the prosecution of Barto.

Senator Muth said, " Victims of all ages need and deserve to be protect by the law. The legislators in this building have the power to protect and help victims NOW. SB540 provides a pathway to both healing and justice for ALL survivors."

Barto survivor Amanda Dorich, who made a victim impact statement in his criminal trial said, "The five brave women who filed this lawsuit are young enough to be given access to the civil justice system under Pennsylvania's outmoded statute of limitations law. Dozens and perhaps hundreds of other victims have lost that right. That is why we are here at the state capitol to push for new legislation to open a window to justice for all victims of child sexual assault this year."

SB 540 would amend Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) to:

- eliminate the criminal and civil statute of limitations (SOL) for sexual abuse, assault and misconduct victims whose abuse happened at any age;
- provide a 2-year civil window to revive previously expired SOL claims, and;

- also provide a 6-month delay to the window in which survivors who wish to voluntarily settle their claim outside the court system can do so.
- void provisions of NDAs, contracts, settlements, or other tools that are contrary to the bill's prohibitions
- clarify penalties for failing to report abuse

Sarah Klein, an attorney working with survivors said, " Every victim of Johnnie Barto deserves to have their day in court and the opportunity to hold him and the institutions that enabled him accountable. Pennsylvania needs to join New York, New Jersey, Montana and other states that are opening windows to justice for victims of child sexual assault."

Ms. Klein, a Pennsylvania resident is the first known victim of former US Olympic gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar and has appeared at legislative hearings throughout the country to argue on behalf of statute of limitations reform for victims of sexual assault. She received the 2018 Arthur Ashe Courage Award at the ESPY's for her advocacy.

[Manly, Stewart & Finaldi](#) is California's leading law firm representing child victims of sexual abuse. The firm has represented more than 150 victims of clergy sexual abuse in California and hundreds of others throughout the United States. The firm also represented plaintiffs in the \$140,000,000 settlement against LAUSD in the Miramonte case, the largest sex abuse settlement against a School District in the US. The firm currently represents more than 180 alleged victims of former Michigan State University and U.S. Women's Gymnastics Olympic Team doctor Larry Nassar. Michigan State University has settled this case for \$500,000,000, this is the largest settlement of any personal injury case against a University.

[Dalton Law Firm](#) is a Delaware based law firm representing victims of child abuse, medical malpractice and automobile accidents. Founding partner Bart Dalton is a former Delaware Deputy Attorney General and past president of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Mr. Dalton holds the largest Medical Malpractice and automobile accident verdicts in the history of Delaware.