

Press Release / Gemma's Story

ONE STEP CLOSER TO A NEW CHILD VICTIMS ACT, ADVOCATE GEMMA (*THE KEEPERS*) HOSKINS SHARES WHY SHE RELENTLESSLY FIGHTS FOR SURVIVORS

*Gemma's **Survivors Stories** episode debuts as state report on clergy sexual abuse nears release*

Baltimore, MD (March 15, 2023) – Gemma Hoskins doesn't mince words. She speaks her mind, from the heart, and with passion. And when Gemma talks, especially on behalf of Maryland's childhood sexual abuse survivors and their urgent need for justice, people listen.

Gemma, a Baltimore native who taught school for nearly 40 years, became an unintended celebrity in the breakthrough 2017 Netflix docuseries, *The Keepers*. Gemma shares in the latest episode of *Survivors Stories* the real-life role she relishes most -- an advocate. And for the past several years she's been among those fearlessly leading the fight on the front lines – whether demonstrating in front of the Archdiocese of Baltimore offices or testifying in Annapolis before legislators - for survivors rights and a new **Maryland Child Victims Act**.

“It's just important for me to assist people who haven't found their voice yet,” explains Gemma in the video, which features family photos as a girl growing up in Baltimore. “The survivors just want their perpetrators to be held responsible and I believe that's what this bill, the Child Victims Act of 2023, is going to do. It will finally give them the opportunity to have some justice.”

The landmark legislation would remove the age restriction for survivors filing claims against their abusers. Gemma stresses the overriding responsibility of Maryland lawmakers: “We have to make sure children are safe, they are loved, and they are cared for.”

Survivors Stories is presented as a public service by sexual abuse attorneys/advocates from Jenner Law and Grant & Eisenhofer, in conjunction with SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused By Priests). The series premiered just before the state senate hearing on the proposed child victims reform legislation, and prior to the crucial court ruling paving the way for the interim release of the four-year Maryland Office of Attorney General investigation into systemic child sexual abuse within the Archdiocese of Baltimore. In its redacted form, that report is expected to soon be released.

Survivors Stories is part of the wide ranging public information effort that includes an online grassroots petition endorsing passage of the legislation.

David Lorenz, of the state's chapter of SNAP, hosts the petition campaign, and along with Gemma and many others has been among the most outspoken supporters of the legislation, testifying before both legislative chambers.

Attorneys Robert K. Jenner, of Jenner Law, and M. Elizabeth Graham, from co-counsel Grant & Eisenhofer (Wilmington, DE), commended Gemma and all the participants in the survivor-impact series, the survivor and advocate witnesses who appeared at the hearings, and the continuing counseling and advocacy efforts of the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center.

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