

Bill to Protect Children and Close Consent Loophole Becomes Law

By Administrator

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Governor Roy Cooper signed Senate Bill 199, a bill to modernize sexual abuse laws as well as strengthen enforcement and protection for children who have been abused, into law. The new law will close loopholes in existing sexual assault laws and strengthen penalties against child abusers. Previously, North Carolina lagged the nation in closing loopholes in sexual assault laws, including consent revocation and incapacitation by alcohol. A bipartisan bill, SB 199 was passed unanimously in the state legislature. “For too long, North Carolina has not protected sexual abuse victims the same ways other states have, and this law closes that consent loophole,” said Governor Roy Cooper. “This bipartisan legislation goes a long way to protect all victims of sexual assault, especially children, and will help more people seek justice against abusers.”

Gov. Cooper was joined by Tom Campbell, President and Chief Executive Officer of Family Service of the Piedmont, Mary Williams-Stover, Executive Director of the Council for Women and Youth Involvement, Monika Johnson-Hostler, Executive Director of the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, several survivors and advocates, as well as local and state elected officials. He noted the role Attorney General Josh Stein played in organizing the legislation and advocacy for SB 199.

“Keeping children safe from abuse and violence is job one for parents and for the state. The SAFE Child Act does exactly that, and I am proud that my office drafted and championed the law. It will make sure abuse is reported and prosecuted – allowing more victims to see justice and putting abusers behind bars. It will better protect kids online from sexual predators. And it will allow adults who were violated as children to sue their abusers in court for the damages they suffered,” said Attorney General Josh Stein.

In North Carolina, an estimated 35 percent of women will experience intimate partner violence or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. 81 percent of women in North Carolina have reported experiencing at least one negative outcome due to their experience with intimate partner violence, with 56 percent developing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms.

The new law will go into effect December 1, 2019.