

Kayleigh's Law helps more than a thousand Arizona crime victims

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'Lifetime probation' didn't always last a lifetime. Kayleigh Kozak gave victims a new way to protect themselves.

"Kayleigh's Law" allows for victims of dangerous crimes to obtain lifetime injunctions against their abusers. The law went into effect in 2022.

PHOENIX — In one year, more than a thousand victims of dangerous crimes in Arizona elected to have a lifetime injunction against those who harmed them.

Before September of 2022, they didn't have that option.

It's because of ["Kayleigh's Law."](#) One year later, the law's namesake, Kayleigh Kozak, is reflecting on its impact.

Turning personal pain into progress: Arizona passes first in the nation law



When Kozak was a middle school student in Buckeye, she was sexually abused by her soccer coach. Her abuser was convicted and sentenced to lifetime probation.

In 2020, she got a call that he was petitioning to have his probation lifted.

"Why should the person who sexually abused me when I was a child ever be able to have the opportunity to contact me with no repercussion? My parents were told he would be on probation for life," Kozak said. "In Arizona, when a perpetrator receives lifetime probation, it does not mean that they are on probation for their lifetime."

Kozak had few options. So she decided to speak out.

"I couldn't sit back and do nothing because victims deserve protection from the person who has harmed them," Kozak said.

She ultimately partnered with Sen. Sine Kerr (R-Buckeye) to draft what is now known as "Kayleigh's Law." It gives victims of dangerous crimes, like sexual abuse, the option for a lifetime injunction, also known as a restraining order, against their perpetrator for life.

It passed with bipartisan support.

The law went into effect in September of 2022 and in one year, hundreds of victims have been able to utilize it.

"In one year, 1,009 victims in the state of Arizona have been able to serve their perpetrator with an injunction that is valid for their natural lifetime," Kozak said.

In Maricopa County alone, 868 lifetime injunctions were issued at the time of sentencing. An additional 62 victims sought retroactive injunctions, according to the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County.

"There are many loopholes in the system and it is very, very broken," Kozak said.

Arizona was the first state in the nation to pass a law of this kind. Wisconsin followed shortly after and Kozak said she is now working with close to a dozen others to draft similar legislation. Her goal is to bring "Kayleigh's Law" to every state.

"To know that two states now offer this protection is great. But victims and survivors, they don't just matter in two states. They matter in every state," Kozak said.

Sen. Kerr, the bill's sponsor, issued the following statement:

"Over the past year, Kayleigh's Law has provided more than a thousand victims of sexual assault and other atrocities added protections from their abusers. I'm proud of being a small part in crafting this legislation, and I'm thankful Kayleigh turned her painful experience into meaningful change for survivors suffering through similar heart-wrenching abuses."

