



**H.5 – Extending Hearsay Exemption to Victims of Abuse Under 16-Years-Old**  
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Thank you for the opportunity to speak with the committee today. We are proud to support H.5, which would extend age-appropriate protections to children who have experienced serious physical or sexual abuse.

H.5 would expand the existing hearsay exemption—currently available to victims under 13—to include victims under 16. This bill builds on procedures that have been in place for more than a decade and have provided effective protections for young victims and been strengthened over time.

We know that involvement in the legal system can compound trauma, especially for children. Being asked to recount a traumatic event in a high-stress, unfamiliar environment without needed supports can have significant physical and emotional consequences. It can undermine a child's healing process, permanently shape their relationship with the legal system, and create an unintended barrier to justice.

For victims—whose sense of agency is often diminished by the abuse they've experienced—it is essential that the justice system provide them with supportive options. One such option is allowing trusted adults, such as medical providers or teachers, to share the information a child has disclosed to them.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions.