



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

August 10, 2021

Governor's Veto Message Regarding House Bill 239

By the authority vested in me, pursuant to part II, Article 44 of the New Hampshire Constitution, on August 10th, 2021, I have vetoed House Bill 239, relative to prosecutions for certain assaults against minors.

Occasionally, well-intentioned legislation can fall apart because of a few misplaced words or technical language that was left out. Unfortunately House Bill 239 contains a fatal flaw that must prevent it from moving forward. I support the legislative intent to extend the statute of limitations for juvenile victims of first-degree and second-degree assault. However, this bill presents severe negative consequences that could greatly hinder ANY prosecution of first-degree assault in New Hampshire.

In a letter dated August 6, 2021, the Attorney General and each of New Hampshire's 10 County Attorneys detailed their concerns with House Bill 239. This bill fails to make clear that the extension of the statute of limitations for prosecutions under RSA 631:1 to a victim's twenty-fourth birthday only applies to juvenile victims. Consequently, as the letter states, the bill "...could readily be interpreted to preclude any prosecution for a crime under RSA 631:1 beyond a victim's twenty-fourth birthday. As such, cases under RSA 631:1 with adult victims over twenty-four years of age simply would not be able to be charged or prosecuted."

I encourage the legislature to address the concerns raised by the Attorney General and New Hampshire's County Attorneys in legislation next year. The letter recommends amendments necessary to ensure the legislative intent of House Bill 239 can be successfully implemented and I will be supportive of such a bill.

For the reasons stated above, I have vetoed House Bill 239.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher T. Sununu
Governor