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Fifteen states have revised their laws in the past two years extending or suspending statute of limitations to allow child sex abuse claims stretching back decades, unleashing potentially thousands of new lawsuits against the U.S. Roman Catholic Church.

Some highlights of the new laws:

Window states

Eight states and the District of Columbia have established "lookback windows" allowing people to sue no matter how long ago the alleged abuse took place. They can file civil suits against both their alleged abusers such as priests and the church or other institutions where they worked.

Vermont — Eliminated age limits in May and window never expires.

District of Columbia — Two-year window opened in May. After that, suits allowed until age 40, up from 25.

Montana — One-year window opened May 7. After that ends, suits allowed until age 27, up from 24.

Arizona — Nineteen-month window opened in June. After it closes, suits allowed until age 30, up from 20.

New York — One-year window allowing previously barred suits opened August 14. After that, suits allowed until age 55, up from 23 before the law was passed.

New Jersey — Two-year window opened Dec. 1. After that ends, suits allowed until age 55, up from 20.

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Hawaii — A previous window for filing old claims was first opened in 2012. It was reopened in 2018 and lasts until April 2020.

California — Three-year window opens Jan. 1, 2020. Triple damages if cover-up is proven. After window closes, suits allowed until age 40, up from 26.

North Carolina — Two-year window opens Jan. 1, 2020. After that ends, suits allowed until age 28, up from 21.

States extending time limits

Seven other states changed statute of limitations so victims could file civil cases alleging abuse later in life. Many states also have "discovery" rules allowing alleged victims to sue even later if they can show they only realized the impact of the abuse in recent years.

Michigan — Raised age limit to 28 from 19 in 2018.

Alabama — Raised age limit to file to 25 from 21 this year.

Texas — Raised age limit to 48 from 33 this year.

Rhode Island — Raised age limit this year to 53 from 25 for lawsuits against abuser and from 21 against institutions.

Tennessee — Raised age limit to 33 from 19 in May.

Connecticut — Raised age limit to 51 from 48 in June.

Pennsylvania — Raised age to 55 from 30 in November, but the law is not retroactive and so just for allegations of abuse in the future.

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