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For Immediate Release
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AG Rapadas Commemorates 1st year Anniversary of Sexual Assault Law

Hagatna, Guam-On March 09, 2011 Bill 33-31 became law, abolishing the statute of limitations for the reporting of sexual assault crimes, and forever empowering those who have been victims of this atrocious crime.

Attorney General Leonardo M. Rapadas gave his full support of the passing of Public Law 31-06 and said, "Childhood sexual abuse is extremely difficult to overcome for a survivor and for some victims, it may take many years into adulthood to come forward and report these crimes to authorities."

At the public hearing a year ago, Chief Deputy Attorney General Phillip Tydingco, who spoke on behalf of AG Rapadas, explained that under common law and modern criminal statutes, committing murder was and is not subject to a statute of limitations because it is considered inherently evil.

"Child sexual abuse is clearly one of those crimes that is inherently as evil as murder; there is no statute of limitations on the pain, shame, and fear that victims of sexual abuse and rape feel; there should be no statute of limitations on the time it takes for victims to obtain the strength and courage to seek justice," he said.

In February of this year, the Office of the Attorney General and other agencies and non-profit organizations gathered to continue their quest in advocating for victims of child sexual abuse.

Under the LaniKate Protehi Y Famagu'on-ta Act, task force members which include presiding officer AG Rapadas, representatives from the Association of Individual, Marriage and Family Therapists, Catholic Social Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, the Department of Public Health and Social Services, the Department of Youth Affairs, the Guam Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Family Violence, the Guam Police Department, Guam Youth Congress, Healing Hearts, the Judiciary of Guam, the legislature, Sanctuary, the University of Guam and Victims Advocates Reaching Out (VARO) were charged with gathering statistical data concerning child sexual abuse, creating goals for local policy on child abuse prevention, and improving the services offered by government agencies, private organizations and community-based groups to victimized children.

A preliminary report with task force recommendations that seek to expand the services and programs for survivors of child sexual abuse through educational means is expected to be submitted to I Maga'låhen Guåhan and I Liheslaturan Guåhan by April 1, 2012.

"We hope that with the passage of P.L. 31-06 and through the work of the LaniKate task force, it will enable and encourage people who have been a victim of child sexual assault in the past to come forward so that their perpetrators can be held accountable for their actions... and to stop these pedophiles from victimizing more innocent children," said AG Rapadas.

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