# Call to Action

## Send a Letter Opposing AB 218

Along with a coalition of other JPAs and organizations like CAJPA, CASBO and CSBA, SELF has been actively opposing, unless amended, AB 218 (Gonzales) Childhood Sexual Abuse: Statute of Limitations; which would extend the civil statute of limitations to age 40, (*22 years after the plaintiff reaches the age of majority)*, on sexual abuse and assault claims against not the perpetrator, but third party public agencies. The current civil statute of limitations on these cases is eight years, or age 26.

While we understand this is a delicate matter and we certainly support and are sensitive to the victims of these egregious crimes, we cannot support this significant expansion of the statute of limitations in civil cases against public agencies.

As written, this bill would put every public agency in the position of having to defend itself against decades-old claims when witnesses may be scarce, memories may have faded, or there has been a turnover in staff. This will surely result in funding intended to educate students and serve communities to instead be spent on increased legal costs, including payments to attorneys, whether or not the claim is valid.

The bill would also revive, for three years, any action for childhood sexual assault that would otherwise be barred due to statute of limitations and in some cases would allow for treble damages.

We are committed to working diligently to enhance the safety of all children. Prevention is a top priority, and creating strong requirements for prevention needs to accompany any new legislation to address victim compensation. Structural change, including independent oversight and monitoring, awareness, and training and reporting both for students and teachers are the most effective measures we can implement to prevent child abuse. We recognize the need for robust and fair victim compensation, and we feel that our proposed amendments will fill the need for aggressive, effective prevention measures to accompany fair and reasonable victim compensation.

The SELF Board weighs carefully the decision to support or oppose any legislation. In this case, SELF feels that a continued focus on education, awareness and training is the best course of action to preventing further child abuse incidents in our schools.

We urge our members to take the time to contact your local Assembly and Senate representatives to respectfully request a “No” vote on AB 218.

Visit our the Legislation page on our website to view the coalition letter on this bill, which includes the proposed amendments, as well as the bill text for AB 218.