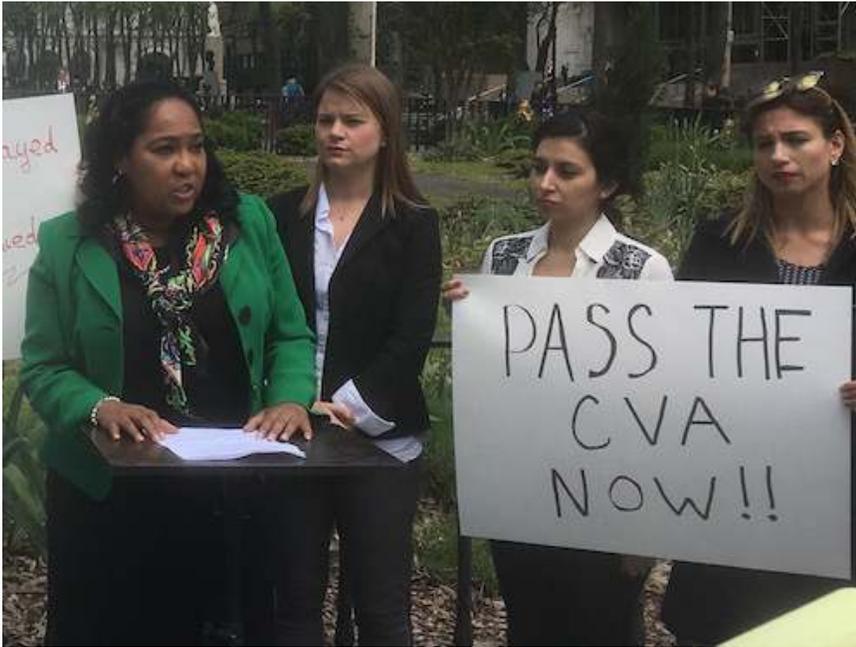




Brooklyn DA Candidate Dwimoh Calls for Passage of Child Victims Act



By [William Engel](#)

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At Borough Hall today, Brooklyn District Attorney candidate Ama Dwimoh appeared to discuss an important issue: justice for child sexual abuse victims.

Dwimoh, founder and

former chief of the Crimes Against Children Bureau, appeared at noon to call for the enactment of the Child Victims Act (CVA), a bill first introduced in 2006. The act, if passed, would eliminate the statute of limitations that prevents child sexual abuse victims from pressing civil or criminal charges past the age of 23.

“I fought for 13 years on behalf of child sex abuse survivors,” said Dwimoh, “and I saw the incredible courage it took for survivors to come forward.”

To support her case, Dwimoh shared the floor with several survivors of child rape and molestation, all adults who only found the courage to come forward decades after they were victimized.

“My abuse happened over 45 years ago,” said Brian Toale, 63. “It happened in my high school and it lasted for pretty much the whole year. My survival was dependent on me convincing myself that if I didn’t tell anyone – if nobody ever found out – when I graduated, that it was like it never happened. And I pretended that for 20 years, not realizing that the downward spiral of my life was coming.”



Brian Toale, 63, abuse survivor. Photo by William Engel

Bridie Farrell, 35, had a similar story. After she was victimized at age 15, she stayed silent about it until 2013. That year, she finally found the wherewithal to tell her story to Mitch Teich, co-host of WUWM 89.7 FM. And as Farrell pointed out, their experiences are by no means uncommon. In New York, one in four girls and

one in six boys have experienced sexual abuse before age 18.

“Personally,” she said, “I’m one in four girls – I have three sisters – so I, unfortunately, am that statistic.”

Toale expressed displeasure at the fact that, in the eleven years since the bill was introduced, the status quo hasn’t changed.

“The way that the New York legislature today is treating child victims is just the same after eleven years,” said Toale. “The problem is that this is still a secret. It’s been shunted away to what I call ‘legislative limbo.’ There is no opportunity for debate. Nothing’s happening out in public... therefore, the public does not have a voice, and our governor can get away with saying, ‘I don’t think there’s enough public support for this bill.’”

The solution, he said, is to garner as much public support as possible, until the collective voice of the CVA’s supporters is too loud to ignore or dismiss.

But as Dwimoh pointed out, it’s just as important to reach out to elected officials. She concluded the rally by making a direct address to the other DA candidates – not to shame them, mind you, but to implore them to help her pass a measure that’s been long overdue.

“New York should be a place where there is truly justice for all, regardless of age or circumstance,” said Dwimoh. “And we must stand together to ensure this critical legislation passes.”