

# The Worthy Adversary

Joelle Casteix: Author, Speaker, Advocate ... and accidental activist



## **Guest Post: Brian Toale**

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*Brian Toale just sent me this regarding his work in New York on the CVA. I asked if I could publish it here.*

*There was so much rawness here. It shows that the survivors who went to Albany were very different from the paid lobbyists who went on behalf of the NY Catholic Conference.*

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By Brian Toale

I spent half a year advocating for the Child Victims Act alongside a group of dedicated and courageous survivors and supporters because the law, as it now stands, prolongs the trauma of abuse by shaming, blaming and silencing survivors as they seek to be heard.

As I looked back to see where I failed in the effort, I realized I'm doing what my abuser did to me 46 years ago, making me blame myself for being exploited. This helped me see how we were set up by men skilled in getting their way.

Governor Cuomo's started by including the CVA in his agenda. He was now off limits lest he abandon us. My abuser groomed me so I wouldn't turn on him.

Senator Flanagan never wore sheep's clothing like the governor, but his refusal to let the CVA get a vote (even with enough votes) killed it. Endangering those whose welfare is in your hands is an abuse of power, pure and simple. This was abuse just as effective as my own abuser's power over me.

Predators need a society that enables them to get away with their abuses. Senator Flanagan had his own enablers. Governor Cuomo strung us along until the last moment before giving us hope with his program bill and immediately snatched it away declaring little hope it would get passed, giving Senator Flanagan all the cover he needed. The plan all along.

I feel violated by what went on this legislative session as I imagine my fellow survivors and advocates do.

Yet I also have a counter-intuitive sense of strength. This time I can't be silenced, I'm not alone, and I can and will fight back. Abusers are bullies and count on us being victims, not survivors.