

the fatal shooting of
 ide her Bowie, Md.,
 ge's County police
 pl. Diane Richardson
 o visit his mother, 50-
 Nadine Woods, about 8
 shot her several times.
 iced dead at the scene.

the street as unbelievable.
 "You can be in your own yard and
 get shot," Wiseman said. "My husband
 is always out in the yard. He said he
 heard a gunshot, saw someone running
 and looked toward their house because
 someone was screaming. Then he
 turned around and two shots were fired
 in this direction; the second one got

Wiseman said her husband was re-
 covering from a gunshot wound to the
 back.
 Shortly before 8 p.m. Monday, officers
 from the Delaware River & Bay
 Authority spotted the slaying suspect's
 black Toyota Camry on the Delaware
 Memorial Bridge and started following
 him. Maryland authorities had issued

squeezed the trigger, police said.
 The two Wilmington officers who
 fired in his direction have been placed
 on administrative leave, Barnes said.
 He said he did not know how many bul-
 lets the officers fired.
 "We won't know until they com-
 plete the internal investigation,"
 See HOMICIDE — B2



Gov. Ruth Ann Minner is applauded by lawmakers after signing the Child Victim's Act. The law eliminates a civil statute of limitations in child sex-abuse cases.

The News Journal/GARY EMEIGH

Child sex-abuse victims cheer law



*"This law
 belongs to
 the children
 of
 Delaware,
 who as
 children
 had no
 voice.
 Now, they
 have a
 voice."*

Sen. Karen
 Peterson,
 D-Stanton,
 co-sponsor
 of S.B. 29

Minner inks measure
 allowing two-year
 'window' for past victims
 to file belated claims

By BETH MILLER
 The News Journal

DOVER — With several strokes of
 several pens, Gov. Ruth Ann Minner
 on Tuesday made Delaware the last
 state a pedophile would want to be in.

Minner signed S.B. 29, the Child
 Victim's Act, eliminating the civil
 statute of limitations in cases of child
 sexual abuse and opening a two-year
 legal "window" during which vict-
 ims whose cases have been previ-
 ously barred by Delaware's two-year
 limit can file suit.

The law is the strongest in the na-
 tion, according to New York law pro-
 fessor Marci Hamilton, edging Cali-
 fornia by doubling that state's
 one-year window. About 1,000 previ-
 ously barred cases were revived in
 California after that law went into ef-
 fect in 2003.

"Sexual predators who victimize
 children are going to learn that
 Delaware will not stand for it," Min-
 ner said shortly before signing the
 bill.

The lead sponsors of the bill were
 Sen. Karen Peterson, D-Stanton, and
 Rep. Deborah Hudson, R-Fairthorne,
 both of whom got a standing ovation
 from about four dozen supporters
 who attended the signing ceremony
 in the Tatnall Building.



Spectators at Tatnall Hall cheer as Sen. Karen Peterson, D-Stanton, explains what went into the process of getting Senate Bill 29 into law.

"This law belongs to the children
 of Delaware, who as children had no
 voice," Peterson said. "Now, they
 have a voice."

The old law required a victim of
 sexual abuse to file suit within two
 years of the injury. So a child abused
 at age 7 had until age 9 to go to court.

Most supporters on hand Tuesday
 were from two groups — the lay
 Catholic group known as Voice of the
 Faithful, and a grass-roots coalition
 called the Child Victim's Voice Coal-
 ition, formed by friends and family of
 Matt Conaty of Wilmington, who is a
 survivor of childhood sexual abuse.
 Conaty's parents were among those
 who fought hardest to build support

for the legislation, and eventually
 more than 60 organizations had
 signed on.

"You transform from a victim to a
 survivor when you are able to use
 your voice," said Conaty, 38. "Scores
 of people helped build the coalition.
 ... It's a testament to teamwork."

Supporters planned to celebrate
 Mass with the Rev. Richard Reiss-
 mann, pastor of St. John the Baptist-
 Holy Angels, and enjoy a covered-
 dish dinner at the Jesus House on
 Milltown Road on Tuesday evening.

John Sullivan, one of the founders
 of the Coastal Delmarva chapter of
 Voice of the Faithful, hoped many
 See MINNER — B2

News Journal 7-11-07

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mother's clean-cut, and a story col-
nial home before showing up Sunday.

"He sent off a thousand warning
signs," Atiba said. "He threatened sev-
eral times to kill the family."

This story contains information from The Washington Post.
Contact Terri Sanghini at 324-2771 or tsanghini@delaware-online.com.

spiral.

But resident James King, one of six peo-
ple who spoke against the plan, disagreed.

"This project does nothing to control
suburban sprawl," he said. "This is subur-
ban sprawl. I don't understand where
more development like this is going to
help us."

can now begin applying for permits to
site work and construction.

Council President Paul Clark recu-
sion himself from the discussion and vote
Bayberry because he is married to Sc

Contact Angie Basiunny at 324-2796 or abasiunny@delaware-online.com.

Minner: Sex-abuse law called toughest in U.S

FROM PAGE B1
states were watching
Delaware's decision.

"This battle's over, but there
are many others," he said.
"This is a wonderful day for the
children of Delaware and hope-
fully for the entire nation. This
sets the example for the rest of
the states to do the right thing
for children. ... Now, it's time
to celebrate."

Peterson and Hudson cred-
ited citizens with helping to
overcome objections raised by
representatives of the Catholic
Diocese of Wilmington, some
nonprofit organizations and the
insurance industry.

"Citizen advocates were ready
to make a difference," Hudson
said, "and it's because of the ad-
vocates that we won.... Now the
predators of the past will be ex-
posed and maybe others will just
get away from Delaware because
of our tough law."

Legislation to change
Delaware's civil statute of limi-
tations in cases of child sexual
abuse was first introduced in
2006 by Rep. Greg Lavelle, R-
Sharpley. Lavelle wanted state
institutions held to the same
standards as private and non-

profit institutions. His amend-
ment to S.B. 29 was defeated last
month, but he later introduced
legislation - which will be wait-
ing for lawmakers when they
return next January - that
would remove sovereign immu-
nity protections for the state in
such cases.

The Rev. Tom Doyle, a Do-
minican priest and church at-
torney who has investigated and
exposed clergy sexual abuse in
the Catholic Church for the past
24 years, called Delaware's new
law "tremendous."

"This is the best legislation
in the country," Doyle said.
"We've had so much opposition
from institutions such as the
Catholic Church, and this
shows it can happen that chil-
dren are more important."

Hamilton, who teaches con-
stitutional law at Yeshiva Uni-
versity's Cardozo School of
Law, said Delaware now "is the
leader of the country" in giving
child sexual abuse victims their
day in court. The law also could
give other victims the courage
to come forward, she said.

"We've heard their testi-
mony and heard their suffer-
ing," she said. "And one thing

we do know is that we've hardly
seen any of them.... You are
now on the side of the angels."
Lawmakers heard hours of tes-
timony on the issue, including
the accounts of those who were
victimized as children. One of
them was Jean Lange, who
brought her two daughters -
Madison, 10, and Kassie, 8 - to
witness the signing, as they had
witnessed the signing of a
change to the criminal statute
of limitations in 2003.

"It's all about protecting the
children," Lange said. "...
We're going to learn some
names now."

Doyle agreed and said
Delaware can expect significant
developments.

"You can expect to see older
victims coming forward, you

can expect exposure for per-
petrators - including some w
other organizations, not ju
the Catholic Church," he sa

"As people go to court a
cases are settled, there will b
means to identify predator
said Avril Madison, a mem
of Voice of the Faithful, who
tended the signing with h
husband, John. "The comm
nity will understand th
they're in the midst. Up ur
now, most victims had to let
the state to get away fro
abusers. This reverses that."

Officials of the Catholic D
ocese of Wilmington had no c
ment on the bill signing, i
cording to spokesman Rob
G. Krebs.

Contact Beth Miller at 324-2784 or
bmiller@wilmingtononline.com.

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