

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 16, 2024

For most of my life, I carried a deep, unspoken pain. I thought if I stayed quiet, if I buried it far enough, maybe I could convince myself it didn't happen. But silence doesn't heal—it only protects the people that caused the harm. Speaking up has been the hardest thing I've ever done, but it's also been the most powerful.

As a teenager, I was sent to youth residential treatment facilities where I endured abuse that no child should ever experience. I was physically restrained, sexually abused, isolated, overmedicated, and stripped of my dignity. I was told I didn't matter, that I was the problem, and that no one would believe me if I spoke up—not even my family. For years, I lived with the weight of that trauma, the nightmares, the shame. It wasn't until I found my voice that I began to heal.

Advocating for change has been one of the most challenging and rewarding journeys of my life. Through this work, I've met so many brave survivors whose stories echo my own. Their resilience is humbling. It reminds me every day why this fight matters—not just for me but for the hundreds of thousands of children still trapped in these systems. For me, it's impossible to see these children as statistics. I see that kid. I know that kid. I am that kid.

When the U.S. Senate came together in a rare show of unity to pass the Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act unanimously on Wednesday December 11th, it was one of the best moments of my life. It was proof that when we listen to survivors and put politics aside, we can create real, meaningful change. But this journey isn't over. I can't celebrate until this bill becomes law, and now it's up to the U.S House of Representatives to finish what the Senate started.

To Leader Scalise, Speaker Johnson, and every member of the House: I urge you to think about the children who can't speak for themselves. They're relying on us—on you—to stand up for their safety and dignity. Passing this bill would be a testament to what we can achieve when we lead with empathy and courage.

I've always believed in turning pain into purpose, in creating something good from something dark. Survivors like me have carried this fight for far too long. Now, I ask you to carry it across the finish line. Let's make this a moment that our country can be proud of—a moment when we chose to protect the most vulnerable among us.

With all my heart and urgency,

Paris Hilton

