

# Abused "White House Boys" Triumph With Passing of Florida Bill

*Survivors and victims' families move closer to justice after a state reform "school" abused young boys for over 100 years.*

TALLAHASSEE, FL, U.S.A., February 10, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Levin Papantonio Rafferty Attorney [Troy Rafferty](#) announced a historic event as the Dozier School for Boys and Okeechobee School Victim Compensation Program bill (CS/HB 21) passed both the Senate Governmental Oversight Committee and the House Judiciary Committee this week.

The bill states, "The program will compensate living persons who were confined to the Dozier School for Boys or the Okeechobee School at any time between 1940 and 1975 and who were subjected to mental, physical, or sexual abuse perpetrated by school personnel while they were so confined."

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*TROY RAFFERTY, ATTORNEY AND SHAREHOLDER, LEVIN PAPANTONIO RAFFERTY*



LPR Attorney Troy Rafferty escorts to Senate and House committee hearings two of more than 20 survivors of childhood abuse at the Dozier School for Boys. Two survivors gave public testimony of the abuse they endured at the state-run facility.

In addition to this compensation, the program would direct the Commissioner of Education to award a standard high school diploma to eligible Dozier survivors.

"This is a landmark victory for every child who endured the hells of Dozier and fights those demons to this day," Rafferty said.

Michelle Salzman, a Republican member of the Florida House of Representatives sponsored the bill.

111 years of beatings, rape, and murder

Despite hundreds of documented cases of rape, torture, and death, the Dozier School remained open from January 1, 1900, to June 30, 2011. A second campus was opened in the town of Okeechobee in 1955.

A team of anthropologists from the University of South Florida excavated the facility grounds and discovered 55 sets of human child remains. One hundred eighty-three kids are still registered at the Dozier School and were never processed out of it, begging the question: What happened to them?

"White House Boys" in Tallahassee

For 16 years, the survivors, now grown men, have fought for legislation that would meaningfully acknowledge the horrific abuse they suffered as young children at the state-run juvenile detention center.

For the last two years, Rafferty has taken up the cause and advocated on behalf of the "White House Boys"--so called because of the abuse, rape, and torture they suffered in the Dozier building of this same name.

"I call them the 'Lost Boys' because they were lost in the system," Rafferty said.

More than 20 of these men spent three days in Tallahassee this week to show their support for the bill.

2 beating rooms, 2 rape rooms

In Rafferty's address to the House Judiciary Committee Thursday, apologized in advance for getting emotional.

Rafferty told the Committee members how he and LPR Attorney Mike Papantonio visited the Dozier School with many of the victims. "I can tell you the evil that is still in those grounds is palpable," Rafferty said.



LPR Attorney Troy Rafferty awaits updates prior to House Judiciary Committee hearing on Dozier bill.

Rafferty described the beatings suffered by children as young as five years old--administered using a 20-inch wooden paddle with a leather strap weighted by metal. Children were forced to hold onto the bed frame while receiving dozens of lashes. Letting go of the frame meant their abusers--state employees--would restart the counting of licks at "one."

"They had two beating rooms and two rape rooms," Rafferty said. "And then, when [the children] were bloodied, bleeding everywhere, beaten, they would be dumped outside the back door of the White House.

"These kids were 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and they were put in [Dozier] for skipping school, smoking cigarettes--not crimes," Rafferty said. "They were put in there for being 'incorrigible.'"

For more on Dozier...

In 2017, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 7115, establishing the Dozier School for Boys Memorial. "The memorial in Marianna is designed to tell the story of the boys who lived and died while at the school," stated a DMS press release.

The LPR group is also participating in "[The Florida Boys](#)," a documentary about the atrocities that occurred in the Dozier School for Boys. The film is currently under production.

A video of this week's hearing can be seen at [2/7/24 House Judiciary Committee - The Florida Channel](#).

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