

\$20 Million Allocation for Dozier Survivors Marks Historic Call to Action for Legal Community

Attorneys who pushed legislators to compensate abuse victims at Florida "reform schools" urge lawyers to stop abuse in today's residential treatment facilities.

TALLAHASSEE, FL, UNITED STATES, June 22, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Governor Ron DeSantis has signed the Dozier School for Boys and Okeechobee School Victim Compensation bill (HB 21), initiating a \$20 million allocation to compensate survivors of abuse at these notorious state-run institutions.

The bill, championed by state Sen. Darryl Rouson (D-St. Petersburg) and backed by key advocates, sets the stage for at least 500 survivors to receive restitution for the physical, mental, and sexual abuse they endured between 1940 and 1975.

The Dozier legislation not only provides financial compensation but also empowers the Florida Department of Education to award high-school diplomas to former students. This comprehensive approach acknowledges the severe impact on the lives of those affected and aims to offer a measure of restorative justice.

“

This is a historic legislation that vindicates victims of abuse that lay hidden in obscurity for too, too long”
Attorney Troy Rafferty

"This is a historic legislation that vindicates victims of abuse that lay hidden in obscurity for too, too long," said

Troy Rafferty, the Pensacola attorney who made it his mission to obtain compensation for the



Pensacola Attorney Troy Rafferty stands to the right of Gov. DeSantis as he signs the Dozier School for Boys and Okeechobee School Victim Compensation bill, while Rep. Michelle Salzman, R-Pensacola, and a group of the “Dozier Boys” look on.

survivors of Dozier and Okeechobee. "Beyond financial recovery, this legislation brings survivors an emotional relief from having their truth finally acknowledged."

The money from this allocation will be shared equally among the men who qualify. Between 300 and 1,000 men are still alive. Many of the boys who were sent to the Dozier School in the 1940s, 50s, or 60s have passed away since then.

This allocation follows a broader commitment to address past injustices, exemplified by the 2017 establishment of the Dozier School for Boys Memorial and the discovery of 55 child remains by University of South Florida anthropologists in 2013.

The passage of this legislation is a significant milestone in the decades-long fight for justice. Rafferty, together with Attorney Mike Papantonio, of Levin Papantonio, initiated the push for this compensation, with Rafferty tirelessly collaborating with Florida legislators on behalf of survivors.

"In 16 years of efforts, nobody accomplished what Troy Rafferty accomplished in front of the Florida legislature," Papantonio said.

The Battle Continues With a Mission of Prevention

Papantonio emphasized that the Dozier legislation should signal a new era for lawyers in 2024, urging them to avoid the inaction that allowed abuses at Florida's state-run schools to persist until they closed in 2011. Recently, Levin Papantonio has collaborated with Paris Hilton, an advocate for survivors of the "troubled teen" industry, to raise awareness within the legal community and the general public about ongoing abuses nationwide.

Levin Papantonio has also initiated several [lawsuits in Alabama](#), targeting state agencies and officials for discrimination and abuse of disabled children in residential childcare facilities (Case 2:23-cv-00558-KFP; Case 2:23-cv-00554-ECM-CWB; Case 2:23-cv-00555-KFP; Case 2:23-cv-00556-SMD; Case 2:23-cv-00553-SMD; Case 2:23-cv-00557-SMD), and against the Laurel Oaks Behavioral Center for the sexual assault of an 8-year-old resident (CV 2022-900168.00).

Sara Stephens

Levin Papantonio

+ +1 281-744-6560

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[YouTube](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/722109516>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.