

**From:** Harriet Frdelja [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 6 December 2024 9:36 PM  
**To:** sentencingcouncil  
**Subject:** Your Reference Ain't Relevant Submission: Harriet Frdelja

Hello,

I'd like to make a formal submission in support of the Your Reference Ain't Relevant Campaign.

In High School, i was groomed and sexually abused by my music teacher over the span of 5 years. When I came forward and reported this to the police, the offender pled guilty.

At the plea hearings, the man who assaulted me had 12 character references to support him.

There was a big debate within the court room whether his good character should be perceived as an advantage to groom me, and convince my parents I was safe under his supervision, or if it didn't.

In the end, they concluded it didn't, which was extremely disappointing, because this man who was a well renowned community member absolutely used his good character to groom me and my parents.

This helped to lessen his sentence and charges. It broke my heart.

Because of the nature of child sexual offenders, i want this law to be reformed. Child sexual abusers use their good character to their advantage, to lure innocent children and gain the trust of children, parents and community members. Therefore, why should we use that to their advantage in a court room?

Thank you for listening.

Regards,

Harriet Frdelja