

# BEWARE OF CALLS FOR GRAND JURY PROBES

**Bill Donohue**

In the wake of the Pennsylvania grand jury investigation of the Catholic Church, many states are now weighing probes of their own. To cherry pick the Catholic Church is unjust: If the goal is to root out predators, then no institution, private or public, should be spared. But this is not the goal, which is why only the Church is under review.

Consider some of the leading players behind this “Let’s get the Church” effort. I know them well.

Let’s begin with the Pennsylvania grand jury investigation. What triggered it? A probe of wrongdoing allegedly committed by Brother Stephen Baker at Bishop McCort High School in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown in the 1990s. Guess who the lawyer was for the alleged victims? An attorney from Massachusetts, Mitchell Garabedian. How did he find his way to sue the Pennsylvania Catholic high school? He is no ordinary lawyer—he is an activist with a vendetta against the Catholic Church.

In 2006, Garabedian sued Father Charles Murphy of Boston for inappropriately touching a minor; the girl said the incident occurred 25 years earlier. On the eve of the trial, the woman dropped her suit. In 2010, Garabedian sued Father Murphy for allegedly fondling a man 40 years earlier. The accuser was deep in debt and his credibility was questioned even by his own family! After a six month probe by the archdiocese review board, the priest was exonerated.

When Father Murphy died in 2011, he was a broken man. Brian McGrory wrote about him in the *Boston Globe* saying that what Garabedian did was a “disgrace.” After reading the story, I

called Garabedian to see if he had any regrets about pressing charges against Father Murphy. He went ballistic: He started screaming like a madman accusing the archdiocese of operating a “kangaroo court.” I asked him to calm down but he would not. Indeed, he made sweeping condemnations of all Boston priests.

A few weeks after my phone call, Garabedian spoke at a conference held by SNAP, a professional victims’ lobby that has been totally discredited. “This immoral entity,” he said, “the Catholic Church, should be defeated. We must stand up and defeat this evil.” This not the voice of reason—it is the voice of a hater.

SNAP is leading the way calling for grand jury investigations in all the states. Its leadership has been devastated but it is now trying to resurrect itself. Here is what I wrote about it last year:

- It accepts kickbacks from attorneys
- It is motivated by a pathological hatred of the Catholic Church
- It has no respect for the rights of accused priests
- It lies about priests
- It lies about survivors
- It lies to judges
- It lies to the media
- It seeks to intimidate and silence its critics
- It blindsides diocesan officials with leaked lawsuits
- It abuses donations
- It exploits survivors by offering unlicensed counseling services
- It spends practically nothing on servicing survivors
- It manipulates the media by staging events
- It retaliates against employees who question its operations.

These are not baseless charges. To read more about it see my article, “SNAP Implodes” on our website.

BishopAccountability is a website that is gleefully pushing

grand jury investigations in the states. The media trust it as a reliable source. I don't. Its director, Terry McKiernan, once accused Cardinal Timothy Dolan, behind closed doors at a SNAP meeting, of "keeping the lid on 55 names" of predator priests. That's a lie. I have several times contacted McKiernan to give me the names, but he never does.

Illinois Supreme Court Justice Anne Burke is also behind the grand jury investigations. She is not an impartial observer. She believes that priests should not have constitutional rights. In 2006, she said a priest should be removed from ministry on the basis of a single unsubstantiated accusation. "We understand that it is a violation of the priest's due process—you're innocent until proven guilty—but we're talking about the most vulnerable people in our society and those are children." She never said whether *non-priests* should also be denied their constitutional rights.

Rebecca Randles of Kansas City, Missouri is demanding a statewide investigation of Catholic priests. She is the same dishonest lawyer who sued me and lost in a trumped-up libel case against me. Her hatred of the Catholic Church is palpable.

Randles is best of buddies with Jeffrey Anderson, the most sue-happy lawyer in the nation. He has sued the Vatican several times and lost, and now he is leading the effort in Minnesota to launch a grand jury investigation of the dioceses. He once described himself as a "dedicated atheist." His goal, he says, is to "sue the s\*\*\* out of them [the Catholic Church]."

These are the kinds of persons seeking grand jury investigations in the states. They are motivated by hate, not justice. It's about time Catholics opened their eyes to this reality and not allow themselves to be played by these people.