

D.A. SPOTA, GRAND JURY AND NEWSDAY RESIST INCLUSIVE MANDATORY REPORTING BILL

Yesterday, *Newsday*, the Long Island daily, ran a story on a Suffolk County grand jury report on sexual abuse committed by priests in the Diocese of Rockville Centre; the report is available on the newspaper's website. Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on this issue:

"Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota has said that the grand jury could have indicted 23 priests for sexually abusing minors if the proper state laws had been on the book. 'We will not be satisfied,' he said, 'until we have reporting requirements directly to law enforcement.' But nowhere did Spota mention his support for a mandatory reporting bill that would cover all professionals who learn of adult-minor sex.

"The grand jury was similarly guilty of this sin of omission, except more so: in its recommendations, it specifically said that the New York State legislature must mandate that 'a priest, minister, rabbi or any other person serving a religious institution or Diocese in ministry' report instances of child sexual molestation to the authorities. It did not say that the law should cover everyone.

"*Newsday's* record on this issue is a disgrace. In June 2002, it unfairly suggested that it was the Catholic Church that was resisting an inclusive bill. Worse, there has yet to be an editorial demanding such legislation.

"What Spota, the grand jury and *Newsday* won't say is that the New York State bishops are in favor of an all-inclusive reporting bill. The reason there isn't one is because the New York Civil Liberties Union and Family Planning Advocates (the lobbying arm of Planned Parenthood) killed such a bill last

June: they did not want it to extend to abortion providers.

“D.A. Spota and *Newsday* risk being seen as partisans if they do not speak out in favor of blanketing all adults with the same law.”