

# GOV. BROWN VETOES ABUSE BILL; VICTORY FOR FAIRNESS

On October 12, California Governor Jerry Brown vetoed a bill that would have allowed adults who were allegedly molested when they were a minor to file lawsuits, provided the abuse occurred in a private institution. The bill would have lifted the statute of limitations for one year.

Governor Brown saw right through the machinations of those who selectively sought to allow alleged victims of sexual abuse another chance to file suit. He properly noted that legislation passed a decade ago already covered the Catholic Church, so there was no need to do so again.

Most important, Brown denounced the politics involved. "This extraordinary extension of the statute of limitations, which legislators chose not to apply to public institutions, is simply too open-ended and unfair," he said.

On September 10, Bill Donohue wrote a six-page letter to Governor Brown citing his concerns." This legislation is being sold as an antidote to the sexual abuse of minors," he said. "In fact, it only applies to the private sector, thus allowing all alleged victims at the hands of public school employees off the hook," he added. Donohue branded the bill "discriminatory and flagrantly unjust."

Donohue also cited the sexual abuse of students at Miramonte Elementary School in Los Angeles, offering a detailed description of what happened; over half of Donohue's letter was on Mira-monte. His point was plain for anyone to see: these students would be excluded from the bill sponsored by Sen. James Beall Jr., simply because they were abused at a public school.

Donohue was delighted that Governor Brown saw fit to mention

Miramonte in his statement. The governor said those students who were assaulted "are no less worthy because of the institution they attended."

The Catholic League contacted over 1,000 parishes in California, all the lawmakers, and every one of our members in the state asking them to demand justice. But the real heroes are the bishops of California, led by Los Angeles Archbishop José Gomez. We are so happy that Gomez pulled out all the stops.

The final proof that this bill was driven more by anti-Catholicism than any alleged interest in child welfare came when Republicans tried to amend the Beall legislation to include public institutions. It was defeated. To engage in bigotry is always wrong, but it is particularly despicable when it is done under the guise of protecting children.

It is always gratifying when those we help are thankful for our efforts, and that was certainly true in this effort. Kudos to Governor Jerry Brown.