

MICHIGAN AG REPORT ON LANSING DIOCESE IS FLAWED

[Bill Donohue](#)

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel released a report in December on sexual abuse in the Diocese of Lansing. It is seriously flawed, though she received no pushback from the media; they accepted the report at face value. We did not, and with good reason: Nessel's animus against the Catholic Church is indisputable (see our website for the evidence).

This is the fourth diocesan report on this subject: reports on the dioceses of Marquette, Gaylord and Kalamazoo were previously issued. The Lansing report found that there were 56 diocesan officials who were accused of sexual abuse between the 1950s and the 2010s. Unlike most probes on this subject, this one includes alleged adult victims as well as minors.

The alleged offenders include one male teacher, three religious brothers and 52 ordained clergy (four deacons and forty-eight priests). Of the 56, two-thirds are dead. Of the one still in active ministry, the allegation was found to be unsubstantiated by the diocese.

The report found that two-thirds of the alleged victims were males; a quarter were females; the rest targeted males and females. Most of the cases took place during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Our review of Nessel's report found serious mistakes that inflated the total number of alleged victims and deflated the number of male victims.

- The report lists alleged male and female victims as John Doe and Jane Doe, respectively. There were 120 John Does and 42 Jane Does listed. However, there were also 40

other alleged victims in the report who were not listed as either John Doe or Jane Doe. Of the unlisted, 37 were male and three were female.

- The report lists several instances where there is no mention of a John Doe, yet they are still included in the tally. For example, there is no record of John Doe 30 nor of Jane Doe 10.
- In some cases, the report lists Jane Doe where the victim was male. Also, in one case Jane Doe was not a victim, but rather the wife of a male who alleged abuse. In another case, a Jane Doe was a sibling of a John Doe but did not claim she was abused.

Why would the report inflate the total number of alleged victims and deflate the number of male victims? It is obvious to any honest scholar who has covered this issue—to protect homosexuals from scrutiny. For decades now there has been a persistent cover-up of the role that homosexual priests have played in the clergy abuse scandal (see my book, [*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse*](#)). The guilty parties include the media, government officials, educators and activists.

Another serious problem with the report is that it disregards the Diocese of Lansing's records on abuse cases. Of the 56 accused in the report, only 21 are listed in the Diocese of Lansing's credibly accused list (Nessel's report relies heavily on data reported on the website of bishop-accountability.org, which is hardly a reliable source).

Upon investigation, the Lansing diocese found that many of the accusations were not deemed to be credible: It is not easy to substantiate accusations about alleged offenses that took place decades ago. In several cases, the Diocesan Review Board could not find *any* evidence of abuse. In four cases, the accused passed a polygraph exam. Yet they were still included in the report!

Attorney General Nessel is not interested in curbing sexual

abuse. If she were she would stop stalking the Catholic Church and start probing the public schools. That's where this problem is on-going.

USA Today reporters investigated all 50 states to see how they handle the sexual abuse of students. They gave Michigan an overall grade of "F." They said its background system was "weak" and was "left to local school districts." Also, mandatory reporting laws were determined to be "weak." In terms of transparency, they found "no information online about teacher disciplinary actions and misconduct." To make matters worse, information on teacher misconduct was "not shared with other states."

There is plenty here for Nessel to mine. It's time for her to investigate public school kids who have been abused in the past, as well as those currently being raped by teachers.

Also, since Nessel did not confine her probe to minors who have allegedly been abused by priests and other staffers, an examination of sexual misconduct in the public schools must include an investigation of teachers, administrators and other school personnel who have been accused of molesting or harassing other adults, including the parents of their students.

We are contacting every lawmaker in the state to do what should have been done a long time ago: insist on a probe of sexual misconduct in the public schools. It's time to stop religious profiling and treat every segment of society equally.

Contact Nessel: miag@michigan.gov