

MICHIGAN OFFICIALS ASKED TO PROBE THE SCHOOLS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on why he is appealing to Michigan officials to probe the public schools:

[As we pointed out recently](#), perverts and rapists are preying on public school students in Michigan today, yet neither Governor Gretchen Whitmer nor Attorney General Dana Nessel are asking for an investigation of the schools. That's because they are too busy hounding the Catholic Church.

Nessel recently started an investigation of clergy sexual abuse, but not of ministers, rabbis, or imams—only Catholic priests—and Whitmer is asking state legislators for a \$2 million supplemental allocation to pay for the Catholic probe.

Why only Catholic priests? Was there some breaking news that priests are on a rampage molesting students? No. It is due to one thing: the Pennsylvania grand jury report released last year that detailed wholly unchallenged and unsubstantiated charges against priests, most of whom were dead or out of ministry.

Why was the Pennsylvania grand jury report launched? Not because of some pending crisis initiated by law enforcement or reporters. It began because one bishop turned in one high school faculty member who was accused of an offense in the 1990s.

Now ask yourself this question: If a school superintendent turned in a teacher for an old offense, would Pennsylvania's Attorney General launch an investigation of every public school in the state dating back to when Truman was president?

In any event, what does this have to do with Michigan? Nessel argues that if there were cases of abuse in

Pennsylvania—dating back to World War II—then surely there must be cases in Michigan. Surely there are. Ditto for the public schools. So why aren't lawmakers being asked to investigate them?

Does Michigan have a problem with public school students being sexually abused? Clearly it does. How do we know? Because in the 50- state analysis of this issue conducted by *USA Today*, published in 2016, Michigan was rated among the worst in the nation: It received a grade of "F." Also, in 2017, CARE House ranked Michigan 6th in the nation in the number of cases of human trafficking.

Accordingly, I am writing to Governor Whitmer and the entire state legislature asking for an investigation of sexual abuse in the public schools. If they decide to cherry pick the Catholic Church, they would be guilty of religious profiling. Moreover, the courts may see them as engaging in religious discrimination. Surely many Catholics, and non-Catholics, would.

The Catholic League takes this issue seriously. That is why we filed an amicus brief defending the rights of priests in Pennsylvania last year. We won, 6-1, in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court last December.

We will be monitoring all Michigan public officials on this matter, and will take whatever steps are necessary to assure justice. We will also keep Michigan Catholics in the loop as events unfold.

Contact Governor Whitmer's chief of staff, JoAnne Huls:
HulsJ1@michigan.gov