

OPEN LETTER TO PENNSYLVANIA SENATORS

Dear Pennsylvania Senators:

Now that the House has passed a bill providing a two-year window for alleged victims of sexual abuse to come forward, it is time the Senate amend it to be inclusive. The current bill discriminates against private institutions such as the Catholic Church.

The amendment by Rep. Mark Rozzi is an outrage. It codifies inequality and injustice by allowing for disparate treatment of the public schools. If the standard of conduct for waivers of sovereign immunity is gross negligence, why is the bar set lower for Catholic schools? If the public schools are entitled to a cap on damages, why are Catholic schools not afforded the same treatment? Is the goal to bankrupt Catholic schools, while protecting public schools?

Jenn Kocher, spokeswoman for Sen. Majority Leader Jake Corman, astutely notes that a child abused by a doctor in the public sector would have to prove a higher degree of negligence than would a child abused by a doctor in private practice. "We believe abuse is abuse," she said. So do we. There are no moral grounds for disparate treatment.

Please amend the bill to make it inclusive, in every aspect, of public entities. No institution should receive preferential treatment.

Sincerely,
William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President