

# PENNSYLVANIA GRAND JURY'S ANTI-CATHOLIC WITCH HUNT

Bill Donohue comments on a coming Pennsylvania grand jury report:

Pennsylvania authorities are about to release a grand jury report on clergy sexual abuse of minors in six Pennsylvania Catholic dioceses. Activists and media are predicting a “bombshell” report. What has really taken place is an anti-Catholic witch hunt.

Why else would then-Attorney General Kathleen Kane (she is now the *former* Pennsylvania Attorney General, having been convicted of perjury, criminal conspiracy and obstruction of justice) single out the Catholic Church when she launched this grand jury probe?

What about sports coaches, Boy Scout leaders, psychologists, public school teachers, rabbis, ministers, and every other group of adults who work with children or adolescents? Anyone who knows anything about the subject of the sexual abuse of minors knows that there is not a single such group or institution that has not had a lousy record of dealing with this problem.

Pennsylvanians certainly know it, especially with regard to the rampant and ongoing scandal of sexual abuse of students in the public schools.

“Pa. ranks No. 2 in teacher sex crimes,” ran the headline in the Pottsdam, Pa. *Mercury* over an AP story in July of 2014. Seven months later, pennlive.com reported: “Predators in the classroom on the rise in Pa., analysis shows.” The story reported abuse of students by school personnel had quadrupled since 2007.

“It’s an enormous problem all across the country, and Pennsylvania’s at the top of it,” said Terry Abbot, who at the time (2015) was chairman of Houston-based Drive West Communications, which had tracked this issue nationwide for more than a year. “This isn’t a list you want to lead.”

And it’s not a scandal Pennsylvania authorities or media want to probe. In a local sidebar to the July 2014 AP story, the *Mercury* listed eight “recent cases” in which teachers, coaches, and an administrator had been convicted of sexually abusing minors in their charge.

The statewide grand jury probe of Catholic dioceses grew out of a grand jury investigation of the Altoona-Johnstown diocese, which resulted from Kane’s intervention in a case involving one Catholic high school in that diocese. So if that was enough to trigger a statewide investigation of Catholic dioceses dating back to World War II, why wasn’t this rash of much more recent cases in one region of Pennsylvania enough to trigger a statewide grand jury probe of sexual abuse in the public schools?

State Rep. Mark Rozzi called for this statewide probe of the Catholic Church and is now cheerleading in anticipation of its release. Why has he never similarly called for a statewide probe of Pennsylvania’s government schools, given that his state has ranked number two in the country in teacher sex crimes?

And why did Rozzi for years sponsor legislation that would suspend the statute of limitations on abuse committed in *private* (read *Catholic*) institutions going back endlessly, while giving public schools a pass?

Similarly, why has the *Philadelphia Inquirer* championed Rozzi’s legislation, without ever calling for an end to the doctrine of sovereign immunity which protects public schools and their abusive personnel from such lawsuits?

In every case, the answer is the same. Their real interest is sticking it to the Catholic Church, not protecting children. The coming grand jury report is just more of the same.