

PENNSYLVANIA GRANDSTANDING

LAWMAKER'S

Pennsylvania lawmaker Mark Rozzi's colleagues ought to call him out immediately for his demagoguery: he wants to use the taxpayer's money to investigate every diocese in the state for possible sexual abuse crimes. He does not want to target any other institution—just the Catholic Church. If he were seriously concerned about the issue of sexual abuse, he would call for an investigation of all public and private institutions. His real interest, however, is sticking it to the Catholic Church, not protecting minors.

Rep. Rozzi's grandstanding is inspired by a grand jury's revelation that the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown improperly dealt with past cases of priestly sexual abuse. Not surprisingly, this expedition started because of alleged abuse at a Catholic high school in that diocese. This alone merited a sweeping look at abuse dating back to World War II.

Anyone who knows anything about the subject of the sexual abuse of minors knows that there is not a single demographic group, or institution, that has not had a lousy record of dealing with this problem. Swimming coaches, camp counselors, Boy Scouts, psychologists, public school teachers, rabbis, ministers, Hollywood producers—all have a sordid past. So why is it that only the Catholic Church is fingered?

To take just one example, when it comes to teachers raping students, Pennsylvania has the second worst record in the nation. Terry Abbott is chairman of the Houston-based Drive West Communications, and his organization tracks this issue nationwide. In 2014, he concluded that "It's an enormous problem all across the country, and Pennsylvania's at the top of it. This isn't a list you want to lead." Indeed, a review by the *Tribune-Review*, a Pittsburgh daily, found that between

2004 and 2014, disciplinary actions against teachers more than quadrupled, and that 50 to 60 percent involved sexual misconduct.

The cherry picking, and the rank hypocrisy, must end. We contacted all lawmakers in the Keystone state.