

PROGRESS MADE IN NY STATE ABUSE LAW

There are two bills before the New York State legislature dealing with the issue of amending the statute of limitations for cases involving the sexual abuse of minors. One bill, sponsored by Assemblywoman Margaret Markey, would allow those who were abused in a Catholic school a half-century ago to file suit; it would do nothing to change the privileged status of the public schools (the accused have only 90 days to file a claim). The other bill, sponsored by Assemblyman Vito Lopez, would apply equally to private and public institutions.

The Markey bill cleared an Assembly committee two weeks ago by a vote of 11-8. Yesterday, the Lopez bill passed by a margin of 18-1.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“While this issue is not over, what happened yesterday was a victory for those who want equal justice for private and public institutions. The big losers are those who want to discriminate against Catholic and Jewish schools while insulating the public schools.

“The losers include SNAP, a professional victims’ advocacy organization greased by steeple-chasing lawyers; attorneys who stand to profit from soaking the Catholic Church like Irwin Zalkin; attorneys who have a vested ideological interest in milking the Catholic Church like Marci Hamilton, a professor of law at Yeshiva University; and newspapers with an animus against Catholicism like *Newsday* and the *New York Times*.

“Those who support the Markey bill argue that her bill would apply equally to Catholic and public schools. They are wrong, and it isn’t a matter of opinion: in California, when a bill similar to Markey’s was passed, victims of public school abuse

were turned away. Those who lost yesterday know this, but it doesn't matter. That's because they don't believe in a level playing field."

Thank Assemblyman Lopez: LopezV@assembly.state.ny.us