

# Sex Abuse in Schools

The Catholic League commends Martha Irvine and Robert Tanner of the Associated Press (AP) for their [3,272 word article](#) "Sexual misconduct plagues US schools." AP reporters studied disciplinary records of teachers in every state and the District of Columbia and "found 2,570 educators whose teaching credentials were revoked, denied, surrendered or sanctioned from 2001 through 2005 following allegations of sexual misconduct." This thorough investigation reveals how deep the problem of sex abuse in public schools truly runs.

We regret, however, that the writers didn't take the teachers unions to task for failing to do more to make sure offending teachers never return to the classroom. Though certainly some offenders are punished, many teachers who are suspected of serious offenses are protected by union rules, and merely moved to another classroom. This practice is so common it is called "passing the trash." In New York City, for instance, it is virtually impossible to fire a teacher because of molestation. In some cases, teachers are assigned to sit in empty classrooms (collecting paychecks), in the wake of serious charges.

We do appreciate why the teachers unions feel strongly that the rights of accused teachers must be remembered along with the accusations of students. We agree, and add that the same consideration should be shown to anyone under suspicion of a crime, including Catholic priests. It is all too often that people legitimately concerned about sexual abuse of children wish to toss out clerics at the slightest suggestion of offense, whether the accusation has merit or not.