

SEX ABUSE IN THE SCHOOLS: GO AFTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS ONLY

Rev. Anthony Evans, president of the National Black Church Initiative, supports a bill by New York State Assemblywoman Margaret Markey that addresses the sexual abuse of minors. In today's *Newsday*, he blames the Catholic Church for opposing it. Evans says, "It is a shame we have to fight against the [Catholic] church in this. It breaks my heart."

Yesterday, State Senator Thomas Duane explained why he supports the Markey bill. He said that "for one year after the passage of this bill, adults who were abused years or even decades ago as children could bring charges against the abusers...Not allowing victims to do that is a continued perpetration [sic] against them."

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

"There are two bills before the New York State Assembly that address the sexual abuse of minors. The legislation sponsored by Assemblywoman Margaret Markey, and the one by Assemblyman Vito Lopez. The Markey bill leaves unamended the 90-day period wherein a minor who was abused in a public school must file suit; it opens the door for one year to those victimized in a Catholic school to file suit, even if the crime occurred decades ago. The Lopez bill does not discriminate between public and parochial schools.

"The real shame is that Rev. Evans and Sen. Duane are interested in punishing Catholic schools while exempting public schools. It's time to call them out on this issue. Since they maintain that the Markey bill applies equally to public and Catholic schools, Duane should introduce a bill that would simply reverse the rules: give those who were abused in a Catholic school 90 days to file a claim, and put

no time limit on those who were abused in a public school.

“A reverse Markey bill would also make more sense: most of the abuse has taken place in the public schools.”