

VICTORY IN TWO STATES

State lawmakers out to get the Catholic Church lost big time in Colorado and Maryland. The Catholic League was involved in both fights.

As we reported last month, Colorado legislator Rep. Gwyn Green introduced a bill that would lift the statute of limitations on all future cases involving the sexual abuse of children and grant a two-year period for those currently barred from bringing suit to do so. Her legislation unfairly invoked draconian measures for private institutions like the Catholic Church while letting public institutions off the hook with a mere slap on the wrist. Her bill died in March in the House Judiciary Committee; we had contacted the entire Colorado legislature about this issue.

Maryland lawmaker Eric Bromwell introduced similar legislation that would suspend the statute of limitations on child sexual abuse cases for almost two years. It would allow alleged victims to sue the predator and the organization where the abuser worked. The bill, however, did not apply to public institutions, which are subject to less punitive measures.

We spoke out against the proposed legislation: "It is simply intolerable to allow one set of penalties for private institutions and another for public institutions. If protecting students is the goal, then justice demands that all institutions be treated equally. It is mind-boggling to think that a young person who was previously abused by a public school teacher should be afforded less justice than a neighbor who was molested by a Catholic school teacher."

We contacted the House Judiciary Committee saying that "To discriminate on the basis of religion—even if it is not the intent of the legislation—is indefensible." We are happy to report that Delegate Bromwell withdrew his legislation. We

believe Bromwell (unlike Colorado's Rep. Green) had benign motives, even if his judgment was misguided.