

WASHINGTON STATE SHOULD ADOPT CANON LAW

[Bill Donohue](#)

*Respecting separation of church and state is a two-way street.
That is the occasion for this letter. Contact:
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Sen. Noel Frame
220 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40436
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Sen. Frame:

Your interest in preventing Catholic priests from being excommunicated for violating Canon law if they disclose what they have learned in the confessional is striking. This is especially noteworthy given that the bill that allows the state to crash the confessional is yours.

You see away around this problem. "We the state of Washington have a secular legislative purpose that is to protect children from abuse and neglect and if faith communities choose through their rules not to protect children from abuse and neglect, we the state are choosing not to be complicit in that choice by their rules."

You do not cite one instance where any child has ever suffered abuse or neglect, in any state, because a priest chooses not to disclose what he has learned in the confessional. That's largely because molesters tend not to be the kind of persons who like to "fess up." In other words, your bill is only tangentially related to this issue: let's face it—it is the

nose of the camel in the tent, and we all know what happens after that.

Your proposal to resolve the confessional dilemma for priests is enticing. "I am reminded that Canon law has changed many times over the years in the Catholic faith and there's nothing to say they cannot change their rules to allow the reporting of real time abuse and neglect of children. That is within their power to change and I think they should do so."

Funny thing is I feel the same way about your state legalizing assisted suicide. Except I would recommend that state law follow Canon law.

We the Catholic Church have a theological purpose that is to protect the vulnerable from assisted suicide and that is why state legislators should choose to follow Canon law to protect such persons, as we do not want to be complicit in killing them.

I am reminded that state law has changed many times over the years in secular society and there's nothing to say they cannot change their rules to follow Canon law and put an end to assisted suicide. That is within their power to change and I think they should do so.

My concern for the vulnerable is grounded in the data. In Washington, the majority of those who have been killed by assisted suicide are widowed, divorced or never married. Moreover, six-in-ten (59 percent) say the reason they want to be put down is because they are a "burden" on others.

Surely anyone who is truly interested in protecting kids from abuse and neglect would want to protect the vulnerable from being killed. Your interest is excommunication; my interest is execution.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President