



PRESS STATEMENT NOVEMBER 4, 2014

Bishop Murphy's Election Message Misleads on Bill to Protect NY Children from Sexual Abuse

Catholic groups take issue with Bishop Murphy's statement re Markey Bill

Bishop William Murphy of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, in a letter advising Catholic parishioners to be mindful of certain issues on election day, specifically raised objections to the "Markey Bill" saying that it "seeks to penalize only the Catholic Church for past crimes of child sex abuse." (italics added) His letter was published in the October issue of the Long Island Catholic and reprinted in this past Sunday's bulletin of St. Hugh of Lincoln, a Catholic parish in Huntington Station, NY.

The Catholic Coalition of Conscience, representing Call To Action Metro NY, Call to Action Upstate NY, and Voice of the Faithful, New York, takes issue with Bishop Murphy's incorrect characterization of the bill as targeting the Catholic Church, and indicates its full support of the bill sponsored by State Assemblyperson, Margaret Markey. The bill, called The Child Victims Act, would serve to protect children by removing the statute of limitations for crimes of sexual abuse of children and minors. It would also open a one-year period for victims previously shut out by New York's outdated statutes of limitations to bring forth charges in civil court. This window is important for identifying abusers who may still be in contact with children.

The Markey bill does not cover only Catholic institutions. In fact, it covers ALL private institutions - prep schools, sports clubs, youth clubs, private daycare and early childhood centers, churches of all denominations, synagogues, mosques, AND, very importantly, sexual abuse crimes committed against children in a home setting. In addition, the Markey bill would open a door for judges to have more flexibility in dealing with sexual abuse crimes committed on public facilities. The bill is NOT targeting Catholic institutions; there is no mention of Catholic in the bill. In fact, the Catholic Church and the hierarchy, including Bishop Murphy, in working to defeat the bill, have in effect prevented the general population of children in our state to be afforded better protection against sexual abuse.

The Catholic Coalition of Conscience supports Markey's bill because it would help identify perpetrators currently in contact with minor children and would give past victims their day in

court. It is a matter of justice as well as a concern for children's welfare that impel us to support the Markey bill.

Bishop Murphy is no stranger to controversy. Before coming to Long Island, Bishop Murphy was second in command at the Roman Catholic Archdiocese in Boston which was led by Cardinal Law. He denied accusations that he helped to protect abusive priests while in that position. However, Murphy's denials contradicted a July 2010 report by the Massachusetts Attorney General that stated that Murphy "placed a higher priority on preventing scandal and providing support to alleged abusers than on protecting children from sexual abuse." The report also stated: "There is overwhelming evidence that for many years Cardinal Law and his senior managers (Bishop Murphy was one.) had direct, actual knowledge that substantial numbers of children in the Archdiocese had been sexually abused by substantial numbers of priests. Any claim by the Cardinal or the Archdiocese's senior managers that they did not know about the abuse suffered by, or the continuing threat to, children in the Archdiocese is simply not credible."

BishopAccountability.org, a non-profit project that tracks sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, says Murphy is a "key figure in the sexual abuse crisis, both because of his earlier role in the Boston archdiocese and because of conditions in Rockville Centre."

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