

Peterson, Bobbye

From: Tim and Allison <danalti@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2019 2:21 PM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: SB3 An Act Combatting Sexual Assault And Sexual Harassment

To whom it may concern,

My name is John Timothy McGuire. I am a survivor of clergy sexual assault. My abuse took place in the 60's in Groton CT.

I waited until I was forty eight and three weeks old to speak of the abuse that I suffered at the hands of our locally revered priest. That was three weeks too late to file a civil suit against the Norwich Diocese. I spoke to a lawyer after seeing an article in the paper about my abuser being sued for molesting the daughter of the church cleaning lady for eight years. The memories of which I tried desperately to deny for forty years came flooding back into view, along with the pain, shame, sense of loss of religion and so on. There was no burying it, now. I also contacted the Norwich Diocese about the abuse. That was twelve years ago. I never heard a word from them.

I write today in support of SB3, and the amendments concerning a look-back window for victims like me. What happened to children at the hands of priests and nuns are considered to be of the most heinous of crimes, yet if a victim waits to speak of it they can lose the right for justice. There should be a loophole for the victims to sue the church, not a loophole for the church to escape culpability. The law is backwards, as it stands. Time should be in favor of the victim, considering the average age to come forward with accusations is well into adulthood. To be clear, a victim also has to come to peace with God before one can speak of the abuse. This can take a lifetime. It did for me. I am sixty years old as I write this, and am still waiting for the church to accept responsibility for damages done to me as a child. It should matter not, how long it took me to verbalize the trauma of being forced to put Gods' messengers' penis in my mouth when I was eight.

There are many Connecticut victims out there who have aged out of a suit against their church or diocese. Our monthly support group has some of them. Others remain in the shadows, unable to speak, still. SB3 provides hope for so many where there was none before.

The three dioceses of Connecticut are going to oppose this bill with all their resources, but their comments on why they are opposing it included the failing memory of the victims concerning details of the alleged abuse. I assure you, there is no way to get the details out of our heads. Loss of memory is something the church lawyers are hoping for, but it can't be used as a reason to not prosecute the church without checking the victims' memory, first. Thus, the reason for a chance to right a wrong, not a reason to find non-culpability. Non-culpability can be determined after a victim is given the chance to accuse the clergy or diocese of being abused at their hand.

I can only hope to testify about this proposed bill on April 1st. My health is less than optimal these days. I hope all concerned will consider the plea of all of us who were sexually assaulted as children in the name of God. This bill is our only hope at a chance for healing. Until now, healing has been a pipe dream.

John Timothy McGuire