

March 28, 2019

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I write in support of Committee Bill 3, Section 19. I currently live in Florida and I am over the age of 48.

Where does one begin and who will actually listen and understand with genuine compassion? I'll start by stating that many years ago, I attended St. Ann's Catholic grammar school in Bridgeport, CT. In the 1950's. All was fun and exciting for me, as school should be for a little girl. However, when my body started to go through changes, I found myself being called to the Principal's office, Francis J. McKenna. I remember sitting in class and watching one of his little messengers hand my teacher a note. I would then say to myself, "oh please, don't let it be my name that she calls". The teacher would then say, "Virginia, Fr. McKenna wants to see you in his office. I remember like it was yesterday how I felt. I was scared but I knew I had to go. This is when my predator would sit me on his lap and fondle me all over my private parts and then proceed to rub his penis with my hands. My memories of all these encounters, and there were MANY, make me so sad and angry. So many years have gone by but it is still so much in the front of my mind. I never told a living soul until I was in my 40's when I shared it with my dear friends. I was too young to ever make a decision to come forward – especially when he told me NEVER to tell anyone because it was OK with God because he is a priest. And it would have killed my parents if they knew. I was afraid and full of shame for what went on.

In the 90's, I saw his picture on the front page of a local newspaper where he was being honored for his work at St. Vincent de Paul store in Shelton, CT. When I saw my husband reading this, I just lost it. I started to weep – uncontrollably. My poor husband didn't know what in the world was wrong. I finally shared my past with him. He was very supportive. I finally found a psychologist and saw her once a week for almost a year. I also sought help from two of my Pastors over the years. They helped me cope but NO ONE will EVER erase my horror. That man stole my sweet little childhood. He robbed me of normalcy that I so well deserved.

To this day, I still see myself as a little girl and I am so sad for "me". No little girl should EVER have to experience such misuse of authority and disgusting behavior by this heartless and gutless excuse of a man.

I continue to pray for myself and others who have gone through this type of treatment. Needless to say, I am no longer a Catholic because I have NO respect for the way all this was and is being handled.

I close by saying that I am thankful that our voices are finally being heard.

Sincerely,

Virginia Petitti Sorrentino