

## Peterson, Bobbye

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**From:** [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 02, 2019 10:29 AM  
**To:** JudTestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony for S.B. 3 hearing

Please find enclosed my testimony on S.B.3 . . Thank you for your help .

Ms. or Mr. Chairman and Committee members my name is Gene Prorok and I am a victim of child sexual abuse at the hands of the church and their priests . I am here to support passing the amendments , sec. 24 and 25 to S.B. 3 eliminating the statute of limitations entirely for child sexual assault

First I would like to thank the members of this committee for taking the time and effort to consider this important issue . I believe that you will find that this travesty has occurred to more people and more times than anyone would suspect . This is a very difficult thing to speak of .

I am a 63 year old male and was a victim of sexual assault and rape at the hands of the Norwich Diocese and some of it's priests . I include the Norwich Diocese in my accusation because they were implicit in denying my accusations and covering them up by just moving the priests to another location allowing them to continue abusing children .

My situation was rather involved so I am going to try to give you a brief description of what happened to me . I will not name specific priests or incidents because I haven't talked to an attorney yet and am not sure of the legal implications .

In the early 60's I was a child of polish immigrants displaced by WW 2 . My father was a polish army veteran and my mother had worked as forced labor under the Nazi regime . My parents were staunch Roman Catholics and my mother wanted to raise us to be good religious Americans . They came to Willimantic to work the mills and raise their kids to have a better life than they did. I was enrolled in Catechism classes at 5 years old . We lived very close to the church and schools . The area was dense with apartments and those were the only areas for children to play . The church had a large paved parking lot and the local kids would play ball there . They even had a basketball hoop there for us . Unfortunately that made us easy pickings .

The first instance occurred at catechism class .The other ones are a bit more complicated .I tried to move on at each instance and was taught to trust priests as they were God's disciples . Of course I was very young and didn't fully understand how hideous the events actually were until I was older . Also you are always led to believe that it was an aberration and that it couldn't happen again . Part of what I believe made me a target was the fact that my parents were immigrants and fearful of rocking the boat because of threats to their jobs . One such threat was made when my mother confronted the first priest which consequently disappeared .

I was taught to tell the truth and always tried to tell someone when the events occurred . Of course there were always denials and threats . The second time I told anyone it was a police officer who was investigating someone assaulting children . The officer questioned me then I was taken to a courtroom to identify the assailant . I stood in front of a judge and told him that it was not the man there . I identified the priest and the end result was that I was taken out of the courtroom and called a liar by the officer . He actually told me he would arrest my mom if I kept spreading lies .

The third time I spoke up was at a meeting of the cub scouts in the cellar of the church . I had wanted to join and they were discussing telling the truth . I told one of the leaders about an incident that happened right upstairs in the priests dressing room . He told me to keep it to myself and subsequently I wasn't allowed to join the scouts . I don't recall the reason they provided .

The fourth and final time I said anything about the abuse was in 11<sup>th</sup> grade . I disclosed it to the guidance counselor . The police investigated it and because of denials and cover ups it went nowhere. I never spoke of it again for many years .

What happened to me is probably just a drop in the bucket . In my opinion there was a conspiracy to hide these abusers by moving them around and I have to believe that they conspired and groomed easy targets . It happened to me . On several occasions . I'm sure that others had also come forward back then only to be marginalized , called a liar , and silenced .This is how it was allowed to continue .

I have lived a life of self doubt , difficult relationships , guilt , anger , and drug and alcohol abuse . It angers and saddens me that others suffered because of my inability to stop them . They took away my religion and belief in God . Surely a benevolent God would not allow such things to happen to innocents .

You try to learn to accept that you can't do anything about it and do your best to forget the whole thing but every time I see something in the news or hear about more abuse it just opens up old wounds . A childhood friend of mine couldn't get past what happened to him and his brother . His brother committed suicide and he became a heavy drinker until it finally took his life .

I ask that you please provide us with the opportunity to put all this to rest and get some sort of vindication . Please pass the amendment to eliminate the statute of limitations on child sexual; assault

Eugene Prorok

page 2 of 2