



NEW YORK STATE CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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NEWS

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Statement on Amendment to Markey Bill

Following is a statement from Richard E. Barnes, executive director of the New York State Catholic Conference, regarding the amendments to a bill sponsored by Assembly Member Margaret Markey (D-Maspeth) that would suspend the civil statute of limitations for claims related to child sexual abuse in New York State:

“After several years of denying the fact that her bill would exempt public institutions, Mrs. Markey has now acknowledged that her original bill did just that. However, even this amended bill remains terrible public policy for the state.

“For several years, the Catholic Conference has opposed Mrs. Markey’s bill for several reasons, namely that statutes of limitation exist in law for a good reason and that it is impossible to defend decades-old claims; that the bill could seriously impact the ability of the Catholic Church and other not-for-profits to provide health care, social services and education programs to the citizens of the state; and, finally, that because the bill only applied to private institutions and not to public institutions where the majority of non-familial abuse occurs, it is inherently unfair.

“In our opposition, we have been very clear that a legitimate debate on the merits of this bill could not occur until all institutions, including public, were included. The Assemblywoman has now announced her intention to do just that. This amended proposal will therefore impact not only the Catholic Church and non-profit sector but also public school districts, public health care institutions, state agencies, counties, cities and towns, as well as their insurers.

“Mrs. Markey and her supporters have stated that Catholic clergy account for only 2 percent of sexual abuse cases. In California, a “window” bill aimed at the Church resulted in some \$1.3 billion in settlements from Catholic entities. It is therefore likely that Mrs. Markey’s bill could easily result in hundreds of billions of dollars in settlements against all entities, public and private, in every corner of our state. Clearly, such staggering numbers make this legislation a matter of grave consequence and intense public interest.”

The Catholic Conference represents New York State’s Bishops in matters of public policy.