

## WCC Alert: Please Act Now on Statutes of Limitations Bill

### WCC Action Alert: Oppose Statutes of Limitations Waiver

Our Church Needs Your Help To Protect Its Ministries

Before November 5<sup>th</sup>, the Assembly may vote on [Assembly Bill 453](#), a bill that would remove the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse cases and permit suits, no matter how old, to be brought in court. This bill is badly flawed and we Catholics need to oppose it.

### BACKGROUND

The bill opens the door to lawsuits on decades-old cases of child sexual abuse. The legislation is unfair. It targets private and religious groups and shields government bodies from similar suits.

- In Delaware, a similar law resulted in more than 80% of all lawsuits being filed against Catholic agencies even though clergy account for a very small share of child sexual abuse (sources estimate less than 5%).
- As a result, the Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware, was recently forced to file for bankruptcy.

Assembly Bill 453 is modeled after the Delaware law.

- **The bill targets private and nonprofit employers of alleged abusers.** Although the bill does allow suits against government agencies, the doctrine of "sovereign immunity" bars suits against these same government bodies for the negligent supervision of their employees. Public entities would not be held liable for the decades-old acts of their employees.
- **Victims abused in the public sector have little-to-no recourse.** Even if a victim was permitted to sue a government agency, damages are capped at \$50,000.

### ACTION REQUESTED

**Please contact your State Representative and urge him or her to oppose AB 453!**

Make the following points about this legislation:

- The bill is unfair in its unequal treatment of public and private institutions.
- Highlight the potential damage to parishioners and Catholic groups who are not culpable for wrongdoing committed decades ago. The Catholic Church does much for the needy of Wisconsin. The costs of this bill could make the Church's mission of helping the poor that much harder during these tough economic times.
- Stress that the Catholic Church remains committed to helping victims/survivors of child abuse find healing.

To find contact information for your Wisconsin State Representative, visit the WCC's [E-Advocacy](#) webpage and enter your zip code, or call the State Legislative Hotline, 1-800-362-9472.