

HB

92

Alaska State Legislature

Chair

Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Vice-Chair

Labor and Commerce Committee

Member

Resources Committee
State Affairs Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee

Finance Subcommittees

House Environmental Conservation
House Military & Veterans' Affairs
House Court System



A Communication From
REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN
District 31 Anchorage

Session:

Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Phone: (907) 465-4931

Fax: (907) 465-4316

Toll Free: (800) 870-4391

Interim:

716 W. 4th Ave., #330
Anchorage, AK 99501-2133

Phone: (907) 269-0205

Fax: (907) 269-0207

Representative_Bob_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us

April 30, 2003

To: Senator Fred Dyson, Chairman
Health, Education and Social Services Committee

Fr: Representative Bob Lynn 

Re: Scheduling of HB 92
"An Act relating to reports by members of the clergy who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has suffered harm as a result of child abuse."

Please schedule HB 92 to be heard in Committee at your earliest convenience. Attached are the supporting documents for this bill. Thank you.

Alaska State Legislature



Chair
Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Vice-Chair
Labor and Commerce Committee

Member
Resources Committee
State Affairs Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee

Finance Subcommittees
House Environmental Conservation
House Military & Veterans' Affairs
House Court System

A Communication From
REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN
District 31 Anchorage

Session:
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Phone: (907) 465-4931
Fax: (907) 465-4316
Toll Free: (800)-870-4391

Interim:
716 W. 4th Ave., #330
Anchorage, AK 99501-2133

Phone: (907) 269-0205
Fax: (907) 269-0207
Representative_Bob_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 92

It is essential that children be protected from the abuse of sexual predators. Several classes of persons, such as nurses and teachers, are currently mandated to report actual or suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

HB 92 adds clergy to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse. The bill does recognize and address the unique character of "penitential communication".

In summary, HB 92 adds to the protection of child safety, and enhances the beneficial work and reputation of the faith community.

Alaska State Legislature

Chair

Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Vice-Chair

Labor and Commerce Committee

Member

Resources Committee
State Affairs Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee

Finance Subcommittees

House Environmental Conservation
House Military & Veterans' Affairs
House Court System



A Communication From
REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN
District 31 Anchorage

Session:
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Phone: (907) 465-4931
Fax: (907) 465-4316
Toll-free: (800) 870-4391

Interim:
716 W. 4th Ave., #330
Anchorage, AK 99501-2133

Phone: (907) 269-0205
Fax: (907) 269-0207
Representative_Bob_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us

Sectional Analysis for HB 92

- Section 1.** Simply adds *clergy members* as a 9th category to the existing 8 categories of people currently required to report child abuse or neglect.
- Section 2.** Exempts knowledge obtained through a confession/penitential communication from the law.
- Section 3.** Defines Clergy member in statute

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: HB 92
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Law
 Title "An Act relating to reports by members of the BRU Criminal Division
clergy . . .suspect that a child has suffered harm . . ." Component All
 Sponsor Representative Lynn
 Requester House State Affairs Component No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

| OPERATING EXPENDITURES | FY 2004 | FY 2005 | FY 2006 | FY 2007 | FY 2008 | FY 2009 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Personal Services | | | | | | |
| Travel | | | | | | |
| Contractual | | | | | | |
| Supplies | | | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | | | |
| Land & Structures | | | | | | |
| Grants & Claims | | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous | | | | | | |
| TOTAL OPERATING | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CAPITAL EXPENDITURES | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CHANGE IN REVENUES () | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

| | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1002 Federal Receipts | | | | | | |
| 1003 GF Match | | | | | | |
| 1004 GF | | | | | | |
| 1005 GF/Program Receipts | | | | | | |
| 1037 GF/Mental Health | | | | | | |
| Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate) | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Estimate of any current year (FY2003) cost: 0.0
 Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Full-time | | | | | | |
| Part-time | | | | | | |
| Temporary | | | | | | |

ANALYSIS: *(Attach a separate page if necessary)*
 This bill would add members of the clergy to the list of mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect, unless the knowledge of or reasonable cause to suspect child abuse and neglect was acquired during a penitential communication. The law would be retroactive, even if the victim had reached the age of majority. Failure to report is a class B misdemeanor.

The Department of Law does not anticipate a fiscal impact from passage of this legislation.

Prepared by: Joan M. Kasson Phone (907) 465-5370
 Division: Attorney General's Office Date/Time 2/24/03 5:13 PM
 Approved by: Kathryn Daughhete for Gregg D. Renkes, Attorney General Date 2/24/2003
 Agency: Department of Law

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: HB 92
 () Publish Date: _____
 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
 BRU Family and Youth Services
 Component Front Line Social Workers

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____
 Title REPORTS OF HARM BY CLERGY

Sponsor LYNN
 Requester HOUSE (STA)

Component No. 2305

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

| OPERATING EXPENDITURES | FY 2004 | FY 2005 | FY 2006 | FY 2007 | FY 2008 | FY 2009 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Personal Services | | | | | | |
| Travel | | | | | | |
| Contractual | | | | | | |
| Supplies | | | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | | | |
| Land & Structures | | | | | | |
| Grants & Claims | | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous | | | | | | |
| TOTAL OPERATING | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CAPITAL EXPENDITURES | | | | | | |
| CHANGE IN REVENUES (0) | | | | | | |

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1002 Federal Receipts | | | | | | |
| 1003 GF Match | | | | | | |
| 1004 GF | | | | | | |
| 1005 GF/Program Receipts | | | | | | |
| 1037 GF/Mental Health | | | | | | |
| Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate) | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Estimate of any current year (FY2003) cost: _____

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Full-time | | | | | | |
| Part-time | | | | | | |
| Temporary | | | | | | |

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

HB 92 requires that members of the clergy be identified as mandated reporters of suspected child sexual abuse or neglect under certain circumstances. Section 1 amends AS 47.17.020(a) which governs identified mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. The amendment adds clergy members to the list of mandated reporters. The Department is in agreement with requiring members of the clergy to be mandated reporters and supports this amendment.

Section 2 amends AS 47.17 by adding a new Section 47.17.021, which allows "penitential communication" to not be subject to the mandatory reporting requirement. The section goes on to define penitential communication as a communication with a clergy member intended to be confidential as part of the clergy member's official duties.

Prepared by: Tom Cherian, Acting Division Director
 Division Family & Youth Services
 Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner
 Agency Department of Health and Social Services

Phone 465-3191
 Date/Time 02/20/2003
 Date 02/27/2003

FISCAL NOTE
FN #

STATE OF ALASKA
2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 92

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

The Department supports Section 2 as written.

Section 3 amends AS 47.17.290 by adding a definition of "clergy member." The Department agrees with this definition.

Section 4 amends the uncodified law to address clergy reports of past sexual abuse. The amendment states that on or before January 1, 2004, a member of the clergy or a custodian of records for the clergy may report to the Department or law enforcement, suspected or known child sexual abuse that may have occurred in the past that they did not report. This applies even if the alleged victim has reached the age of majority. Law enforcement would have the jurisdiction to investigate these reports of past sexual abuse. There would be no penalty for failure to report the suspected abuse in the past. The Department supports this amendment.

Should this bill become law the department does not anticipate any fiscal impact.

THE
FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)
ARE
POOR
ORIGINAL
COPIES

The answer to recurring questions: Priests are not above the law

The listening sessions that I have been having in various parishes have turned out to be graced moments for me. They have given me an even greater appreciation of the deep faith of our people and of their care for the church.

The anger surrounding the issue of child sexual abuse in the church is understandable and steels my resolve to make sure we as leadership do everything possible to protect children and youth now. The willingness of Catholics to gather and speak with me on this painful issue gives me hope that together we can face our past, forgive, heal, and become a holier church.

There will be much more information about the listening sessions when I have completed this process later this month. For now, I would like to address some recurring questions that have come up in the listening sessions. Several people have asked, "Why are priests above the law?" and, "Why are not priests who engage in criminal acts reported to the civil authorities?"

I want restate the fact that the Charter for the Protection



State law that reflects our own archdiocesan reporting policies will serve to strengthen our common commitment to the safety of children.

— Archbishop Roger Schwietz

of Children and Youth adopted last year by the U.S. bishops and approved by the Holy See, as well as our own archdiocesan policy, require that allegations of abuse of children or other criminal actions be reported to the appropriate government authority. I am not only committed to that procedure, but, along with all the other bishops of the country, am now required to report annually to an independent review board on how I handle any cases that might come forward.

The Alaska Legislature may soon reinforce this policy by amending state law to require clergy to be mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse.

On a recent trip to Juneau,

I, along with Bishops Michael Warfel of Juneau and Donald Kettler of Fairbanks, spoke in support of this proposal for mandatory reporting by clergy. State law that reflects our own archdiocesan reporting policies will serve to strengthen our common commitment to the safety of children.

The only exception to mandatory reporting by clergy is that which protects the confidentiality of communications that take place during the sacrament of reconciliation. The church's constant discipline regarding the absolute secrecy of confession rests on the church's respect for the sacrament and the penitent.

Within Catholic law, there exists no exception to this sacramental seal. Pope John

Paul II said in 1994, "The priest who receives a sacramental confession is forbidden, without exception, from revealing the identity of the penitent and his sins." A priest who violates this secrecy is automatically excommunicated, and only the pope may pardon the offense.

We must remember that while the priest is the minister of the sacrament, the penitent is actually entering into a communication with the Lord — it is, after all, Christ who forgives our sins. What can be more sacred and private than our communication with the Lord?

While the Alaska bill provides an exception for the sacrament, several states are attempting to enact legislation

that would force a priest to violate the seal of confession in cases of abuse of a child.

In essence, this would force a priest to choose between church law and civil law — an unacceptable position for any member of the clergy. So strongly does the church protect the sacramental seal that Cardinals William Keeler of Baltimore and Theodore McCarrick of Washington, D.C., recently promised to go to jail rather than obey a law requiring them to share the contents of confession.

I stand with them in refusing to betray my solemn commitment in this matter. Such a law would be useless, anyway, since many confessions are anonymous (behind the screen).

It is my hope that in Alaska the legislature respects the seal of confession and maintains the exception for "penitential communication" in its mandatory reporting bill.

Once again, thank you to all who have attended the listening sessions so far and have contributed to the process of making the church safe for children and youth.



Anchorage Daily News

Michael J. Sexton
President and Publisher

Patrick Dougherty
Senior Vice President & Editor

Steve Lindbeck
Associate Editor

Founded in 1946 by Norman C. Brown

Fuller A. Cowell, Publisher, 1993-1999
Gerald E. Grilly, Publisher, 1984-1993

Katherine Fanning, Editor and Publisher, 1971-1983
Lawrence Fanning, Editor and Publisher, 1967-1971

OUR VIEW

Abuse law

Clergy should be included

Rep. Bob Lynn has introduced a bill that would require priests, ministers, rabbis and other religious leaders to report instances of abuse or neglect of minors to police.

Rep. Lynn's measure is in response to allegations of sexual abuse by the Rev. Francis Murphy, a former Anchorage priest, made by Service High School principal Pat Podvin. The Rev. Murphy never was charged with a crime, and Mr. Podvin was not a minor when the abuse allegedly occurred, but allegations of other abuse by the Rev. Murphy and the widespread reports of abuse of minors by priests prompted Rep. Lynn, a Catholic, to act.

Failure to report abuse or neglect would be a misdemeanor.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the measure is its message that religious leaders are not above the law or beyond the law. If anything, their positions of authority and trust require they be held to a higher standard, certainly on a par with doctors and teachers. The Rev. Greg Lindsay of Juneau pointed out that children "should be protected before anyone else." He's right.

Rep. Lynn said people expect their legislators to act responsibly. His bill would make it a legal requirement that men and women of the cloth act responsibly in cases of abuse. It's a step in the right direction.

Bush reveals a

For America's enemies, and for some semi-allies, a just-published U.S. document should be mandatory reading. President Bush's fiscal 2004 budget has little foreign policy content but, properly understood, has immense foreign policy implications. If Baghdad, Paris, Berlin, Brussels and Seoul understand this administration's comprehensive boldness, they will understand not only that regime change is coming to Iraq, but also that the end of NATO as we have known it, and the removal of U.S. troops from the Korean peninsula, are not unthinkable.

The budget evokes 1862. In that *annus mirabilis*, with the national government's writ severely restricted and the entire American project in doubt, Lincoln and Congress nevertheless enacted the Homestead Act, which sped the settlement of the Great Plains, the Morrill Act that begot the land grant college system, and the law that ignited construction of the transcontinental railroad.

Today, with the nation in a war on terrorism and on the brink of a related war against Iraq, the president's budget calls for: A dash for economic growth through another round of tax cuts, a tax-cutting President Reagan did not attempt; prescription drug entitlement linked reform of Medicare; reform of the way Americans save. And in a budget-related document, the administration floats the idea of scrapping individual and corporate income taxes in favor of a consumption tax.

GE
V
cor

international granted, suc

In the far: NATO's four was to keep Germans ar own enervat policies (unc and rising). its boot on it. Russians are ness. And Ar dering why t

Last weel tary Donald ing "stronge rope has ind- so said: "NA an Article 5 c key, should it Those preven ing even min to do so, risk of NATO.

Bill would expand law on abuse

■ **MINORS:** Religious leaders would have to report incidents

The Associated Press

JUNEAU — A bill filed by a lawmaker would hold priests, ministers, rabbis and other religious leaders accountable for failing to report incidents of abuse or neglect of a minor.

Rep. Bob Lynn, R-Anchorage, wants to extend a law that applies to school teachers and staff, doctors, child care providers and police officers to religious institutions.

Failure to report instances of abuse, sexual or otherwise, is a misdemeanor under Alaska law.

Lynn said the measure would apply to religious leaders but not their congregations. It would exempt any information acquired through a confession or penitential communication.

Lynn, a Catholic who attends St. Benedict's Church in Anchorage, said media reports of clerical sexual abuse prompted his bill.

"Whenever anything gets in the headlines



Alaska
Legislature

For more about the Alaska Legislature, including easy ways to contact lawmakers, go to

adn.com/legislature

REPORT: Would be a misdemeanor

Continued from B-1

or on the evening news, people become aware of it and expect responsible legislators to address the issue, and that's what I'm trying to do as a responsible legislator," Lynn said.

An Anchorage high school principal recently alleged a former priest at St. Patrick's Catholic Church abused him when he was 18. Pat Podvin said the Rev. Francis Murphy, who later transferred from Anchorage to the Boston area, sexually abused him at a Girdwood residence more than 20 years ago. Murphy was named last week as one of several Catholic priests accused of sexual abuse who were allowed to move to other states and continue their work.

Retired Catholic Archbishop Francis Hurley last week apologized for not helping Podvin after he reported the abuse. Hurley also admitted

that there have been other allegations of abuse within the past few years, but no one was charged with a crime.

Bob Flint, executive director for the Alaska Catholic Conference, said he believes the conference will support the measure. The conference includes Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau. Flint pointed out that the measure would not have applied in the Podvin case because the victim was not a minor.

The Rev. Greg Lindsay of Northern Light United Church in Juneau said he supports the measure.

"I think that because children get the short end of the stick a lot of the time, they should be protected before anyone else," said Lindsay, who heads a Presbyterian-Methodist congregation.

Measure would hold Alaska clergy responsible for abuse

By TIMOTHY INKLEBARGER
JUNEAU EMPIRE © 2003

Friests, ministers, rabbis and other religious leaders would be held accountable for failing to report incidents of abuse or neglect of a minor under a bill filed Monday by an Anchorage lawmaker.

Mandatory reporting laws already exist for school teachers and staff, doctors, child-care providers and police officers. But Republican Rep. Bob Lynn said the law should extend to clergy to protect children as well as religious institutions.



REP. BOB LYNN

Failure to report instances of abuse, sexual or otherwise, constitutes a misdemeanor under Alaska law. Lynn said the measure, which is expected

to be read on the House floor Wednesday, would apply to religious leaders but not members of their congregations.

It would, however, exempt any information acquired through a confession or "penitential communication."

Lynn did not cite specific examples but noted media reports of clerical sexual abuse prompted his bill.

"Whenever anything gets in the headlines or on the evening news, people become aware of it, and expect responsible legislators to address the issue and that's what I'm trying to do as a responsible legislator," said Lynn, a Catholic who attends St. Benedict's Church in Anchorage.

An Anchorage high school principal recently alleged a former priest at St. Patrick's Catholic Church abused him when he was 18. Pat Podvin said the Rev. Francis Murphy, who later transferred from Anchorage to the Boston area, sexually abused him at a Girdwood residence more than 20 years ago. Murphy was named last week as one of several Catholic priests accused of sexual abuse who were allowed to move to other states and continue their work.

Clergy: Law would only apply to the state's religious leaders

Retired Catholic Archbishop Francis Hurley last week apologized for not helping Podvin after he reported the abuse. Hurley also admitted that there have been other allegations of abuse within the "last few years" but no one was charged with a crime.

Bob Flint, executive director for the Alaska Catholic Conference, said the law would not have applied in Murphy's alleged abuse of Podvin, because the victim was 18, but added that he believes the conference will support the measure.

The Alaska Catholic Conference includes the diocese of Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau.

Flint, an attorney who argues business law in Anchorage, said Lynn consulted with him before introducing the bill. Flint said Lynn was looking for language that provided exceptions for the Catholic confession and extended to similar confessions to other religious leaders.

The Rev. Greg Lindsay of Northern Light United Church in Juneau said he supports the measure and noted he thought it already existed.

"I think that because children get the short end of the stick a lot of the time, they should be protected before anyone else," said Lindsay, who heads a Presbyterian-Methodist congregation.

Lindsay noted that moving religious leaders around from church to church is just as common for Methodists as it is for Catholics.

"(This law) might have the affect of ministerial colleagues holding one another accountable," he said.

Lynn said his bill would protect the church from allowing child abuse to go unpunished.

"I think many in the clergy will welcome this. If you are concerned about the health of the church, you have got to be concerned about this," he said.

Juneau
Empire
Tuesday
Feb 11, 2003

MAR 03 2003

MAR 03 7



DOVE COTTAGE
A Place of Peace
SHAA-KA UT-YATX-NÓOW

Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies

"Serving Juneau and Nine Southeastern Communities"

P.O. Box 20809 • Juneau, Alaska 99802-0809

(907) 586-6623 (business)

(907) 586-2479 (fax)

(907) 586-1090 (crisis)

1-800-478-1090 (toll free in state)

E-mail: aware@alaska.com

February 27, 2003

Representative Bob Lynn
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Lynn:

I am writing this letter in support of HB 92, a bill adding clergy to the list of mandated reporters of suspected or actual child abuse or neglect. Mandated reporting serves to help protect the safety of children and gives children the message that adults want them to be safe and will make efforts to ensure their safety.

As a member of the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the Executive Director of the Network, Lauree Hugonin, is available to provide testimony on this bill as needed.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Alaska's children, as we work together to end violence in the lives of those impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault.

Sincerely,

Saralyn Tabachnick
Executive Director





February 26, 2003

Representative Bob Lynn
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: HB 92

Dear Bob,

This morning the Alaska Catholic Conference formally endorsed your bill on clergy reporting of suspected sexual abuse of minors, HB 92.

The bishops commend you on your efforts to enhance the protection of children while preserving the sanctity of penitential rites.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B. Flint". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "F".

Robert B. Flint
Executive Director

Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sitka and Alaska

Orthodox Church in America
The Most Blessed HERMAN, Metropolitan and Primate
The Right Reverend NIKOLAI, Bishop of Sitka, Anchorage and Alaska
PO Box 210569 Anchorage, AK 99521-0569 Telephone: 907-279-0025 Fax: 907-279-9748
www.AlaskanChurch.org E-Mail: BishopNikolai@oci.net

February 22, 2003

Representative Bob Lynn
Alaska State Legislature
Via Fax - 907-269-0207

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of proposed House Bill 92 which would add clergy to the list of mandated reporters of actual or suspected child abuse. I believe this bill will not only protect the public safety of our children, but will also maintain the integrity of religious groups throughout Alaska.

Sincerely,

+ Bishop Nikolai

NIKOLAI

Bishop of Sitka, Anchorage and Alaska

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------|----------------|------------|--|
| Post-it [®] Fax Note | 7671 | Date | 2/27/03 | # of Pages | |
| To | REP. BOB LYNN | From | Bishop NIKOLAI | | |
| Co./Dept. | FAX | Co. | DIocese of AK | | |
| Phone # | 907 465 4316 | Phone # | 907 279 0025 | | |
| Fax # | 907 269 0207 | Fax # | 907 279 9748 | | |

MAR 03 2003

Vincent J. Doran
No. 411 Pioneers' Home
923 West Eleventh Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501-4390
1 907 272 5262

February 26, 2003

Representative Bob Lynn
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Lynn:

Thank you for sponsoring House Bill 92. The measure, if passed into law, will certainly strengthen the statute on child protection.

Members of the clergy must do their part by reporting instances of sexual abuse of children when they learn of them.

Cordially,

Vincent



Episcopal Diocese of Alaska

1205 Denali Way
Fairbanks, AK 99701-4137

(907) 452 - 3040
(907) 456 - 6552 (Fax)

March 3, 2003

Rep. Robert Lynn
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Rep. Lynn:

Thank you for your letter of February 19, regarding HB 92 which adds clergy to the list of mandated reporters of actual or suspected child abuse. Enclosed you will find a copy of the diocesan Safe Church Program manual. On pages 4 and 5 you will note that we already instruct clergy and lay leaders to notify authorities in such cases.

I am pleased to support your proposed legislation. When it is scheduled for committee, I would be willing to provide testimony on behalf of the bill.

Sincerely,

+ Mark L. MacDonald

The Rt. Rev. Mark L. MacDonald
7th Bishop of Alaska

MLM/clf

Enclosure (1)

**Representative Bob Lynn
District 31 Anchorage
Fax: (907) 269-0207**

Bob,

Thanks for sending me the fax concerning your bill IIB 92. I do support your bill that the clergy should be required to report actual or suspected child abuse. I also agree with your reasoning for the bill. The public safety of our children and preserving the reputation of the clergy is essential. I am, as a Christian, mandated by the Lord in the scriptures to do just what you are asking me to do. Ephesians 5:11 says, "And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them." If it is your desire for me to be of any additional service in this matter, then please do not hesitate to call.

Grateful for your service to our state,

Pastor John F. Hunn



Pastor Hunn from
Anchorage Grace Church



NRLA

NORTHWEST RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

February 20, 2003

Representative Bob Lynn
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Lynn:

The Northwest Religious Liberty Association is the government relations division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As the vice-president for the NRLA, I would like to give my/our support of HB 92. The bill is certainly in line with our church policy. As a pastor I must help to protect our children in any way possible, and I believe that this bill could work toward that end. I would be interested when this bill is scheduled for committee.

Sincerely,

Gary S. Waterhouse, vice-president
Northwest Religious Liberty Association;
pastor, Juneau 7-th day Adventist Church

Mailing: P.O. Box 16670
Portland, OR 97292-0670

Location: 10225 E. Burnside St.
Portland, OR 97216

Telephone: (503) 255-7300
Fax: (503) 253-2455
www.libertyexpress.org

February 19, 2003

Bob Lynn
Representative Lynn
State Capitol, Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
United States of America

Dear Representative Lynn,

We have read HB 92 and find that it is in keeping with our goal for Legislation that Actively works for the protection of our children. We feel that it can only benefit our children to make those that protect their spirits to also protect their bodies. It is our feeling that we all should work to protect our children.

Clergy have often been welcomed into homes and families in ways that no one else has. This position allows them to be aware of the internal family working in a child's life. Just as teacher and childcare providers are expected to report suspected child abuse, so should clergy. Their access to a family is often the same if not greater. We feel that there is sufficient language in the bill to protect the sanctity of confession made within the bounds of religious practice. At the same time not allowing a loophole. We also appreciate the effective date for reporting compliance regarding past sexual abuse. As well as expanding reporters in that instance to include those who keep records for the clergy.

The more adults who put the safety of the children in their lives first, the better off our children will be. Child Abuse is not a family problem it is a community problem. It is time that we as a community confront it. It is only right that our moral compass step up to the front lines in that confrontation. Thank you for your work to advance the right of safety for our children.

Sincerely,

Theresa Williams
President
P. O. P.

P. O. P.
R270 CARNELI S1
JUNEAU AK 99801

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR csmonitor.com

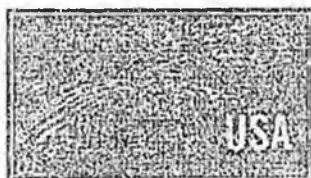
WORLD USA COMMENTARY WORK & MONEY LEARNING LIVING SCI/TECH ARTS & LEISURE BOOKS TH

Home

About Us/Help | Archive | Subscribe | Feedback | Text Edition | MonitorTalk | Search:

SMUCKER'S WWW.SMUCKER.COM

New! Buy a...
for as little as...



-
- ECONOMY
-
- JUSTICE
-
- MILITARY
-
- POLITICS
-
- SOCIETY & CULTURE
-

Also see:
[Buildup in the Gulf](#)
[Living > Religion & Ethics](#)

Monitor Breakfast
 For more than 30 years, the Monitor has been hosting weekly breakfasts in Washington where newsmakers dine and discuss issues, politics, and policy with reporters.

- USA Stories:**
 for 02/19/2003
- [For local budgets, snow brings avalanche of bills](#)
 - [Undercover arrest stirs terror rift](#)
 - [Chicago stampede hints at larger security challenges](#)
 - [Pre-war action already under way](#)
 - [Rain deluge brings scant relief to a parched West](#)

SPECIAL ADVERTISING

September 11
One year later

USA > Society & Culture
 from the June 10, 2002 edition



COMFORT: James Egan and Anita Guibault, alleged clergy-abuse victims, hug at a protest.
 STEW MILNE/AP

More states moving to tighten sex-abuse laws for clergy

Bills call for clergy to report alleged abuse or extend time period for victims to file suits.

By **Seth Stern** | Staff writer of *The Christian Science Monitor*

The sexual-abuse scandal spreading through the Roman Catholic Church this spring is prompting moves in legislatures nationwide to tighten laws designed to ensure that cases of abuse are reported to authorities and prosecuted.

Lawmakers in at least seven states have introduced bills this year to extend the period when civil and criminal charges can be filed against abusers, or to require clergy to report allegations they hear about.

The moves come as the Catholic Church faces a continuing tide of lawsuits – some 300 since January – and new allegations sexual abuse of boys and young men by priests.

[E-mail this story](#)

[Write a letter to the Editor](#)

[Printer-friendly](#)

SUPPORT

→ [Make a c](#)

MONIT

New! Purc
from the M
for as little
each.

TREELE

New! Sul
Treele



SU

[Print editi](#)

→ [Free sar](#)

→ [PDA edit](#)

→ [Treeless](#)

→ [eBook E](#)

→ **XML** V

Headline
Enter your
to receive
headlines.

COM

→ [Advertis](#)



[Defining Terrorism](#)



[Amtrak: All Aboard?](#)



[My Fellow Americans...](#)



[The Heart of a High School](#)

[more projects...](#)



In Afghanistan, 'friendly fire'

An incident last week shows how close US forces and their allies in Afghanistan come to fighting one another.

At a meeting in Dallas this week, Catholic bishops are expected to revise their internal policies regarding abuse allegations. But for now, the lawsuits and media coverage have put pressure on legislatures to act.

Revised laws could provide new protection for sex-abuse victims while creating new liabilities for churches and clergy.

Currently, all 50 states have mandatory-reporting laws regarding sexual abuse of children. But many do not apply to the clergy. Others, in a middle ground, provide that clergy need not report information that comes to light in situations such as the Catholic sacrament of confession.

This year, the tenor of the laws has begun to shift.

In Massachusetts, the epicenter of the scandal, acting Gov. Jane Swift signed a bill last month adding clergy to the list of mandatory reporters, which already included teachers, doctors, and child-care workers. Legislators in Illinois, Missouri, and Colorado have all recently approved bills requiring clergy to report abuse. State governors are expected to sign the measures.

Other states are extending their statutes of limitation that govern whether years-old cases can be brought up in court. Connecticut has extended its statute of limitations. Similar legislation is making its way through California's legislature, but has failed in Minnesota.

As state lawmakers consider such moves, they are being lobbied by a range of groups. These include Catholics and other religious denominations, including The First Church of Christ, Scientist, which publishes this newspaper, and child advocates. But lawmakers say the strongest lobbying often comes, not surprisingly, from embattled Catholic churches in each state.

Connecticut State Rep. Michael Lawlor (D), who sponsored one such bill, says the Catholic Church was the main opponent to expanding the statute of limitations.

The lobbying efforts, large or small, come within a new political climate.

In Wisconsin, state Sen. Alberta Darling says she plans to present mandatory-reporting legislation for priests next year, and expects much easier going than when she backed a similar measure in 1995.

The legislative climate can put the Catholic Church and other denominations in a difficult position as they acknowledge public pressure for new standards and at the same time stand up for time-

[version](#)

[Permission to reprint/republish](#)

.....
Related stories:

03/18/02
[Why child abuse goes unreported](#)

.....
monitortalk:

Weigh in on issues of the day in our MonitorTalk forums.

[Click here...](#)

.....

[→ Custom](#)

[In the Classroom for teachers](#)



[With a Smug It has to](#)



honored traditions such as the confidentiality of confessions.


"We would support any legislation that would protect children," says Marie Hilliard, executive director of the Connecticut Catholic Conference. "Whether this will do that remains to be seen." She says the church did not actively lobby against any provisions of the legislation, but enlisted a law firm it regularly hires to monitor legislation.

In Missouri and Illinois, Catholic bishops proved willing to accept legislation making clergy mandatory reporters, as long as the laws protected confessions. Both states passed bills carving out such exceptions, advocated by an array of denominations, to protect clergy who learn about abuse while serving as spiritual advisers. The provision was criticized by victims' advocates. "This exception could gut the rule," says Lyn Schollett of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Abuse.

In Colorado, a coalition of Protestant churches enlisted Martin Nussbaum, a lawyer specializing in church-state law, to oppose the initial draft of a proposed mandatory-reporting law. A revised version of the bill overwhelmingly passed both houses and now awaits the governor's signature.

In Minnesota, associations representing public schools and municipalities joined churches to oppose legislation extending the statute of limitations.

 [E-mail this story](#)

 [Write a letter to the Editor](#)

 [Printer-friendly version](#)

For further information:

- [Clergy Abuse Tracker: A Coverage Weblog](#) Poynter Institute
- [Catholic Church Abuse Cases](#) FindLaw
- [The Catholic Church and Pedophilia Scandals](#) BeliefNet.com
- [Catholic.net](#)
- [Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence](#)

Please Note: The Monitor does not endorse the sites behind these links. We offer them for your additional research. Following these links will open a new browser window.

- Visit the [Monitor Web Directory](#): sites we like.
-

[back to top](#)

[Home](#) | [About Us/Help](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Archive](#) | [Print Edition](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Marketplace](#) | [MonitorTalk](#) | [S](#)
[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Rights & Permissions](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Today's Article on Christian Science](#) | [We](#)

msn. OneVoice presents Long Distance

3.9¢/MIN ANYTIME

Get Sales Leads via e



- News
- Business
- Sports
- Tech+Science
- Living
- Travel
- Health
- TV News
- Opinions
- Weather+Local
- Shop@MSNBC
- MSNBC.com

Weather Local

Anchorage, AK

Make this your Local News

Top stories from:



Alaska's Online News Source



Autumn Brenton / KTUU

Rep. Bob Lynn says his bill aims to "help the clergy help themselves," but will not violate the seal of the confessional.

Bill would require clergy to report sexual abuse

Juneau, Alaska, Feb. 11 - Should a minister, priest or rabbi face criminal charges for not reporting the sexual abuse of children? A bill being introduced Wednesday in the Alaska Legislature could do just that.



Dan Fagan

Alaska has a mandatory reporting law for some professions, but it does not apply to ministers, priests or other clergy.

Under state law, police officers, day care providers, health care workers, drug counselors, teachers and other professionals must report any known case of child abuse or face charges.

"I think we have to help the clergy help themselves," said Rep. Bob Lynn, R-Anchorage. The former head of Anchorage

- LOCAL NEWS
- » TOP STORIES
 - LOCAL NEWS
 - YOUR VOICE
 - FEATURES
 - VIDEO

Question online yet? Find a Local News Source

classroom

- MORE LOCAL NEWS
- LOCAL NEWS
 - COVERAGES
 - WATCH WILDLIFE
 - WASHINGTON REPORT



PLAY

A little R&R for railroad buffs

- MORE REGIONAL
- Choose more participating local news sources
- KENAI
 - JUNEAU
 - OTHER CITIES

WRITE US: Question or comment? Send us an e-mail

Right to Life, Lynn wants the law to apply to clergy, too.

"I think clergy, as a whole, would respond positively to this legislation," Lynn said. "I don't know why they would not. The only ones who would not respond positively, I would think, are those who like the status quo."

Lynn filed his bill now after all the publicity in Anchorage and nationwide involving unreported sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. But Lynn, who is a Catholic, says his bill applies to all religions. "It is unfair, I think, to single out one church or another."

Bob Flint is an attorney for the Anchorage Diocese. "One of the things we certainly want to do in all this controversy is for everybody to cooperate the best we can to protect children," he said.

Rep. Lynn's bill does not require priests to report child abuse learned during confession. "It would break the seal of the confessional, and that's sacred to our church," he said.

As for the question, which is more sacred -- a child's safety or the seal of confession? "Well, I guess God's going to have to answer that," Lynn said.

Last week, former Anchorage Archbishop Francis Hurley apologized for not helping a teen-ager 20 years ago when he reported being sexually abused by a priest. Lynn said he hopes his bill would prevent that from happening again.

Among other things happening in the legislature Tuesday, Sen. Gretchen Guess, D-Anchorage, introduced a bill shrinking the time the legislature meets from 120 days down to 90 days. Guess said that would save the state almost \$1 million a year.

Also, Rep. Lesil McGuire introduced a bill that would permanently confiscate the computer from anyone convicted of possessing child pornography.

And Fairbanks Sen. Ralph Seekins passed out during a Senate Finance Committee meeting. He was taken to the hospital and is now OK. Seekins said he had flu-like symptoms and that may be why he passed out.

LINKS, SITES & MEDIA

MSNBC not responsible for content of Internet links

- HOME PAGE
- RELIGION NEWSWRITERS ASSOCIATION
- MEMBERSHIP LIST
- BOARD MEMBERS
- CONTACTS
- BULLETIN BOARD
- OUR SUBSCRIBERS
- CONTACT US
- SEARCH PAGE
- THIS WEEK'S RELIGIONLINK
- ABOUT RELIGIONLINK
- SUBSCRIBE TO RELIGIONLINK
- ARCHIVES RELIGIONLINK

SEARCH **HELP**

Word, concept or phrase

Keywords

ALREADY

Faith and peace

What role should faith groups play in advocating world peace?

- They should participate fully, including political activism and civil disobedience.
- They should abide by local law and custom, but make their voice heard.
- They should not interfere or comment on secular policy.

Submit Vote

view results

ReligionLink

APRIL 1, 2002

STATES

Clergy sex abuse: New move toward tougher state laws

Just as policies on handling accusations of clergy sex abuse vary from Roman Catholic diocese to diocese, state laws differ widely on whether clergy and religious institutions are required to report allegations to law enforcement. Now, more states are considering tougher laws. The New York Senate, for one, unanimously passed a bill on March 26 to require clergy to report suspicions of child abuse.

Twelve states specifically require clergy to report suspected abuse, according to the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, a federal agency. Another 16 states require "all persons" report abuse. But many states grant exemption for information clergy during confession. (See list below).

In states where clergy are required to report abuse, what have been the effects, according to state attorneys general, advocates of children and victims, and religious leaders? Are clergy exempted if reporting accusations would violate confidentiality between clergy and confessor? What state limitation for sex-abuse allegations are in effect? Is your state considering a new law, or a tougher one? Are there other laws, such as those involving mental health counseling, that apply or that grant special clergy exemptions?

Why it matters

Because some religious institutions have handled allegations without involving the criminal justice system, many victims' only recourse has lawsuits. Now child advocates, prosecutors and citizens are calling for laws to be toughened.

Skip to [hot sources](#)

Skip to sources [in your region](#)

Background

- A March 22 Associated Press article, "Clergy Reporting Rules," about state laws for reporting clergy abuse of minors is posted here. Under the listing of "Tort Law News" click "More" to find it.
- AdvocateWeb, a nonprofit group working against exploitation by

professionals such as clergy and therapists, links to a sampling of state laws regarding sexual offenses. AdvocateWeb also tracks news stories free electronic newsletter and Media Update Archives.

- A Princeton Theological Seminary field handbook article explaining a of the law affecting clergy, including child abuse reporting and privileged communication, can be found here.
- The Poynter Institute is tracking clergy abuse news stories here.

Hot sources

- The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, Washington, D.C., a federal agency under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, can help with research and statistics. Call (800) 3366 or (703) 385-7565 or email nccanch@calib.com.
- The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops supports stricter laws as long as the laws shield the privilege of confession and other clergy-parishioner conversations, (202) 541-3000.
- Attorney Jeff Anderson of St. Paul, Minn., has represented hundreds of clients who say Catholic priests sexually victimized them. Reinhardt & Anderson law firm, 651-227-9990 or info@ralawfirm.com.
- The Rev. Marie M. Fortune, founder and senior analyst at the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle, Wash., has written several books, including *Is Nothing Sacred? When Sex Invades Pastoral Relationship* (HarperSanFrancisco). Dr. Fortune, a United Methodist minister, edits *The Journal of Religion and Abuse*. 206-634-1100 or mfortune@cpsdv.org. See a March 9 column Fortune wrote for *The Daily Morning News*.
- James T. Richardson, professor of sociology and judicial studies at the University of Nevada, Reno, specializes in ways religious groups come into conflict with the law. Office 775-784-6270, department 775-784-6647 or jtr@unr.edu.

In your region

- The states that specifically require clergy to report suspected child abuse and neglect but grant confessional privilege are Arizona, California, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, and Pennsylvania according to the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information.
- New Hampshire mandates clergy reporting and specifically denies confessional privilege.
- Connecticut and Mississippi require clergy to report, and say nothing about child abuse and neglect reporting statutes about confessional privilege.
- The states that mandate all persons to report child abuse or neglect but do not grant confessional privilege are Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Kentucky, Maryland, Utah, and Wyoming.
- The states that mandate all persons to report and specifically deny confessional privilege are North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Texas.
- Indiana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Tennessee require everyone to report; child abuse and neglect reporting statutes say nothing about confessional privilege.
- Four states' statutes do not specifically mention clergy or "all persons" but they do bring up confessional privilege. Among those states, Louisiana, Missouri, and South

AS of
April 1, 2002

Carolina grant it, and Washington State denies it.

ILLINOIS

- Illinois does not require clergy to report suspected child abuse. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services discusses the law

INDIANA

- Indiana requires all citizens and, specifically, staff members of any public or private institution, school, facility or agency to report suspected child abuse. A copy of the code is posted here.

KENTUCKY

- Kentucky requires all citizens to report suspected child abuse, but exempts clergy-penitent communication. The Governor's Office of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Services discusses the law and the exemptions.

MICHIGAN

- Michigan enacted legislation last year criminalizing sexual contact between mental health professionals and clients, but HB 4525 only moved forward after the deletion of language that had included clergy and school counselors.
- Michigan does not require clergy to report suspected child abuse. The *Detroit Free Press* reported March 27 that a statewide poll, conducted March 19-25 by Lansing-based EPIC/MRA, found that more than 80 percent of Michigan residents said the law should be changed to require the reports.

OHIO

- Ohio specifically requires religious "healers" to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Look up a copy of the revised code relating to child abuse and neglect, Section 2151.421.

WEST VIRGINIA

- West Virginia specifically requires clergy and religious healers to report suspected child abuse or neglect. See West Virginia Children's Service discussion of reporting requirements.

To subscribe to ReligionLink, e-mail subscribe@religionwriters.com

To remove your name from this list, please e-mail unsubscribe@religionwriters.com

© 2001 Religion Newswriters Association / Religion Newswriters Foundation



The Family Church

ANCHORAGE BAPTIST TEMPLE

JASON/WES - PLEASE PUT
THESE LTRs WITH LYNN'S
BILL ON CLERGY REPORTING

THANKS

May 15, 2003

Senator Fred Dyson
State Capitol, Room 121
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Dyson:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my concerns about House Bill 92. As a minister, I am concerned about children and their safety. We take every step possible to protect the children we minister to at Anchorage Baptist Temple.

My concern with this bill is the mandatory breach of confidentiality that will have to exist should HB 92 pass as law. Parishioners will no longer be able to seek pastoral help and counseling confidentially.

In the bill's present form, it is too vague in defining "child abuse" and "neglect." It does not give proper measures for determining actual neglect. Also, it does not provide adequate "confidential communication" or "confessional" privilege for a Protestant Minister to the same degree as afforded a Catholic Priest. It should be noted that once a minister at our church is aware of abuse, even if notified "confidentially," he immediately instructs the offender to stop, and further directs the individual to begin counseling and immediate assessment. Our ministers also inform the individual that if he is not willing to conform, a report to the proper authority must be made as a result of the continued abuse or neglect.

It is not my desire to conceal the sins of the church, but to provide the opportunity for individuals to repent and change their behavior.

I have also enclosed a copy of previous correspondence in reference to this bill.

For further information, please feel free to contact my assistant, Jason Rhodenhizer, or me at 907-333-6535.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Prevo". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jerry Prevo
Anchorage Baptist Temple



The Family Church

ANCHORAGE BAPTIST TEMPLE

April 25, 2003

Representative Tom Anderson
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Re: CSHB92 (JUD)

Dear Tom:

As you are aware, Anchorage Baptist Temple is the home to over 5,000 parishioners. Our Christian ministries continue to provide outreach through TV and radio to thousands of viewers throughout the state of Alaska.

Upon further review of House Bill 92, following the amendments in the State Affairs Committee and then further revisions in the Judiciary Committee, I must respectfully withdraw my support of the legislation for the following reasons:

1. The bill is too vague with regard to the measures of determining a problem exists (e.g. "reasonable cause" and "suspect"), and towards the definition of neglect and "child abuse" and "neglect").

It is conceivable, without a more narrowly written directive, a minister will be forced to report even the slightest and most minimal degree of alleged or perceived neglect or abuse. This further opens the potential floodgate of liability, while destroying the dynamic of "confidentiality" inherent in the foundation of a church, and the minister/parishioner relationship. Also, because the language is vague, it may cause ministerial and church liability premiums to increase with a newly perceived risk of non-compliance with the law.

To that end, I believe that Line 9 of Page 2 should be deleted. (Clergy should not be required to report). Obviously, the teeth are thereby stripped from this bill; however, as discussed, the current language debilitates our ministerial ability and calling as counselors and advisers to members.

2. Section 2 does not provide adequate "confidential communication" or "confessional" privilege for a Protestant Minister to the same degree as afforded a Catholic Priest.

Why is this important? Suppose a parishioner is guilty of child abuse, or more commonly - neglect of his child. Further, assume he attempts to address the problem with a minister. The question arises as to what level of "confidential communication" this amounts to in light of the parameter set by subsection (3), requiring the communication be made "in the manner and context that places the clergy member specifically and strictly under a level of confidentiality." This direction, even with the amended canon law and doctrine language, is still difficult to define.

It should also be noted that once a minister at our church is aware of abuse, even if notified "confidentially," he immediately instructs the offender to stop, and further directs the individual to begin counseling and immediate assessment. Our ministers also inform the individual that if he is not willing to conform, a report to the proper authority must be made as a result of the continued abuse or neglect.

It has come to my attention that HB 92 is a response to the growing number of discovered clergy child abuse cases. The media, as recently as yesterday in the Anchorage Daily News, have centered on the abuse problems surfacing within the Catholic Church. But for edification, the problem appears not to be that a priest fails to report a parishioner's transgressions, but rather that priests are not reporting their fellow priests upon discovery child abuse is occurring.

I would not oppose a bill that required clergy members to report other clergy members whom they have reasonable cause to suspect of abusing a child. This would be a positive step in resolving the conflagration of abuse.

However, if the State House believes clergy must be included in AS 47.17.020(a), then I urge the amendment language proposed by Representative Max Gruenberg as Amendment No. 2 in yesterday's Second Reading of the bill, be revisited and adopted so greater latitude is granted to non-Catholic clergy. A copy of that amendment is attached to this letter.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Prevo".

Jerry Prevo
Anchorage Baptist Temple