

Open letter to Rhode Island victims of priest and clergy

The Rhode Island State Police are conducting an investigation of cases of sexual abuse by Catholic priests and clergy with the diocese of Providence. If you were abused by a member of the clergy in RI, regardless of how long ago, I URGE you to report the abuse to the RI State Police.

I began publicly recommending this step in April, after I told the RI State Police my own story of abuse as a child by a priest who is now deceased. Since then, many other RI survivors have reported their abuse. As a result, the police are building a database that they previously didn't have. By telling your story, however horrific and painful, you will be giving law enforcement important evidence. With your help, the State Police will learn the names of sexual predators and how they were managed by the Providence diocese.

Please go to the State Police even if you already have reported your abuse to the diocese. I am not confident that all cases of abuse reported to the diocese have been passed on to the State Police. An investigative report last November by Channel 10 had the same concern.

Every survivor I know who has gone to the RI State Police has said it was a positive experience. The police officers (both male and female) understand how difficult it is for us to discuss our abuse. I found that the hardest part was walking through the door. Once I started making my statement, the police officers were very compassionate and sensitive. It was as if a weight had been lifted from my shoulders.

The contacts at the RI State Police are:

Detective Heather Donahue-work # 401-444-1264

Detective Marc Alboum-work # 401-444-1216

Lieutenant Joseph Philbin - work # 401-444-1010

I would be happy to talk with you about this, and offer any support I can.

Timing is CRITICAL to our efforts in this important investigation. Victims should provide a statement to the RI State Police SOON, if you feel you can. Let there be an official record of the crimes committed against you, and help protect children who may still be at risk.

Thank you,

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