



Focus on Religious Freedom

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A Glaring Double Standard Holds Catholic Church Accountable for Abuse, While Shielding Public Schools

“Justice is indiscriminately due to all, without regard to numbers, wealth, or rank.”

- John Jay, Founding Father and First US Chief Justice

For the first time “a jury has delivered a verdict against New York City under the Child Victims Act,” awarding \$18 million “to a man who was sexually abused by his elementary school music teacher over 50 years ago.” NY Post reports: <https://tinyurl.com/4c2kx56y>

This is long-delayed justice for children who, because they were abused in shielded public schools by immune government employees, previously had no civil recourse.

Yet even with New York public schools now subject to lawsuits under the Child Victims Act, a glaring double standard still exists between government institutions and private entities.

Civil awards and settlements for those abused in public schools will be paid neither by abusers, school officials who covered it up, nor the public school systems in which the abuse occurred. Taxpayers will foot the bill, although they had nothing to do with the abuse and little control over the bureaucrats who enabled it.

Contrast this with the Catholic Church, which has had to declare bankruptcy in many dioceses, selling off properties and assets, drastically reducing staff and ministries, closing schools and parishes to pay off abuse settlements and judgements.

That innocent people would suffer from the loss of these Catholic services was held to be irrelevant. Harsh consequences were demanded for the Catholic Church and its personnel—as a matter of justice for abuse victims and incentive for urgently needed reforms.

The double standard persists as government bodies and personnel, on the other hand, experience no direct civil liability for institutional crimes and thus no urgency to implement the desperately needed reforms to protect children in public schools.