



STATEMENT BY KANSAS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE ON SB 317

March 23, 2023

The issue of child sexual abuse is of grave importance, not only to the Catholic Church, but to all of society.

The Catholic Bishops of Kansas and their legislative public policy group, the Kansas Catholic Conference, commends the work of elected officials at the Statehouse and their discussions with victim survivors. We commend the courage of victim survivors for coming forward and sharing their stories. No endeavor is ever perfect or even good enough. Legislation alone will not stop the scourge of child sex abuse, but it appears that SB 317 will provide victim survivors more tools in seeking justice for the abuse that has been inflicted upon them.

The sexual abuse of children or anyone else, particularly when it happens as an act of the most intimate betrayal in the context of one's religious faith, is nothing short of horrific. On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Kansas, we again ask forgiveness from all sexual abuse victims who have been harmed by members of the Catholic clergy. There is no time limitation on when the Catholic Church will offer services and support to clergy abuse victims.

The Catholic Church—Bishops, priests, Consecrated Religious and Catholics in the pew—have vowed to learn from what has happened in our past and are determined to act and not let it happen again.

In this crucible of shared pain and anger, we have discerned some of the measures that do help, as far as any human space can be free from sexual abuse. The Catholic Church in Kansas has created and implemented what we believe to be the “Gold Standard” for securing safe environments for children. Background checks, ongoing training, citizen review boards, mandatory reporting and other measures are in place and will continually be evaluated and, when appropriate, revised and improved.

Chuck Weber
Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference
chuck@kansascatholic.org