

1. In my opinion, the confession process is primarily a means where I may "Talk to God" about my inmost thoughts and often failings. Often there may be encouragement and advice offered in return, as well as perhaps an action to make reparation for a wrong. The onus is always on myself to make the reparation, or the whole principle fails. When I confess, absolution is conditional on my "doing the Penance". My Belief is that when I am in the Confessional I am there with God alone and to continue in the "state of sin" is to risk continued separation from God.
2. If the priest is required to report suspicion of such behaviour, should not also doctors, lawyers and other professionals be required to report such behaviours. Is the "seal" of the lawyers chambers being challenged in the same way as the seal of the confessional?
3. I am happy to reveal my identity in the confessional because I have a choice to do so. In most cases the person confessing chooses to have a screen between themselves and the priest thereby making identification impossible except by the sound of the voice. I have heard of "eyewitness" but never of "earwitness".
4. My personal opinion is that most priests would suggest to a person who confesses such a crime as sexual abuse would hand themselves in to police as a condition of Penance.
5. The value of the "seal" of the confessional is so very important to many people in protecting their mental health because it is a place where they can reveal their thoughts fully without threat. If sexual abuse is to be reported, what next? Temptation to jaywalk?
6. The great protections of our society are the privacy of the relationship between doctor and patient, lawyer and client and confessor and penitent. Only one of these protections is being targeted by this proposed Legislation and is easily on the same level as the others.