

My submission is that of an individual, who is a practicing Catholic whose religion is based on a 2000 year foundation of moral and ethical laws and teachings that has pretty much shaped the Western world. The failure of individuals to obey and live by these teachings should in no way reflect the authenticity of the Church and its standards. I find the said Bill's objective commendable in the safety of Children and I do not condone any form of abuse towards anyone by anyone. However, it appears that there is a blatant singling out of a select group, namely, " the ministers of religion" / confessionals while ignoring four other groups as outlined in the Royal Commission's recommendations on mandatory reporting. Further more, the lack of consultation with church authorities on the issue of breaking the seal of confession which is governed by canon law of the Church is literally slapping the face of every Catholic as this is a binding law for all Catholics worldwide. The confessional is an indispensable place of healing of the soul for many abuse victims and not a hiding place for abusers. It can be a safe space for the victims of many circumstances when there is absolute confidentiality and comfort of pastoral care.

Consider lawyers and the placement of confidential matters as equally sacrosanct re priest/pastors and confession.

We need this Bill not to discriminate (the Catholic faith) , not to block an avenue of spiritual healing for victims where needed. Use all other safe guarding methods and not drive a wedge between the State and every Catholic who will feel cornered and violated by such lack of consideration for a church teaching that CANNOT be changed universally. The Catholic church as I understand has agreed to most of the recommendations of the commission, the State should not use a Missile to knock out a mosquito.