

Jeffrey D. Thomas

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Attn: Roberta DiMezza, Clerk House Judiciary Committee HouseJudiciary@rilegisature.gov

State of Rhode Island State House

82 Smith Street

Providence Rhode Island 02903

Re: House Bill 7200-An Act Relating to Courts and Civil Procedure -General Procedure - Statute of Limitations -Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of a Child

Dear Chair McEntee and Judiciary Committee Members:

My name is Jeffrey Thomas and I am writing to you to express my support for passage of House Bill 7200. I am 65 years of age and a survivor of clergy abuse by Father John Gerard Brendan Smyth. Not only did he teach us religion in school, preach Mass on Sundays in my parish, he was also my neighbor living across the street from my childhood home.

The Catholic Church had full knowledge of Fr. Smyth's pedophilia prior to sending him to Our Lady of Mercy Parish and School in East Greenwich, Rhode Island. The Diocese knew Fr. Smyth was abusing children at Our Lady of Mercy even before I started first grade and as early as at least Spring of 1967. The results of these actions have destroyed nearly every aspect of my life. Prior to my recall of abuse I was a successful contractor with over 20 years of experience. Running my multi million dollar business successfully I thought I was climbing to the stars. Owning two homes one in Boxford Ma. one in Warren Vermont I was in the top of my graduating high school class for success. The effects of my abuse crushed me. It was like open heart surgery using a butter knife.

All of this came crashing down with the recall of being molested and raped by Fr. Smyth at the ages of 6 and 7 years old. My attorney Jeff Anderson filed suit against the church back in 2008. For the sake of getting to the point we were told by the court that we did not remember in time. The physical repercussions of my PTSD and Dissociative Amnesia have handicapped me and prevented me from reaching a majority of my life's ambitions. Along with a host of other symptoms, I cannot earn a living with the shortcomings of my PTSD and Dissociative Amnesia. The more stressful a job becomes the worse the number of cognitive skipping I experience.

Dr. Daniel Brown PHD. and Head of Psychiatric Medicine for Harvard Medical School explained to me that this is common for someone who has experienced abuse as severe as I have. He also has other ailments and explanations on my condition as he ran a complete psychiatric diagnostic on me that was part of the case that I never got a chance to process through the courts due to being time barred. This is why HB 7200 needs to pass.

In short through all of this the church has not once offered to help with anything. I was once a millionaire having lost everything and endured bankruptcy. I have nothing and am left penniless.

I look to the members of this House to pass this House bill 7200 so I may seek justice for damages against me. It is my hope, that the church and its hierarchy finally be held accountable for their criminal actions.