Testimony on House Bill No. 7200
The R.I. House Committee on the Judiciary
March 12, 2026

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

The Rhode Island Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the Diocese of Providence, which encompasses nearly 600,000 Catholics statewide, their parishes, schools, and numerous charities, which combine to form our state's second-largest social service provider network, behind only our state government. Thousands of Rhode Islanders of all faiths and no faith daily benefit from the Catholic Church's charitable works. Additionally, the Diocese of Providence is a top employer in the state, with over 2,500 employees working in our parishes, schools, offices, and charitable agencies.

In response to the recently released R.I. Attorney General Report, the Most Reverend A. Bruce Lewandowski, the Bishop of Providence stated: "We have heard of and talked about the tragic, historical scandal of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. What I share with you today is far from new, but each time we hear about it, the trauma and pain are made real once again for victim survivors and their loved ones. We know and understand that the effects of abuse even from many decades' past can persist, as if the abuse occurred yesterday. The Church failed them. Their abusers betrayed their trust and robbed them of their innocence and, in some cases, destroyed their lives. Their faith in God and His Church has been shaken and even lost. I take this opportunity to apologize to the victim-survivors of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy for the failures of Church personnel and others in past decades to protect them and keep them safe. I ask you to pray for them. I am praying for them, and I pledge to continue our support for them through the ministry of our Office of Outreach and Victim Assistance programs."

In September 2002, then Bishop of Providence, Robert E. Mulvee reached a multimillion dollars settlement with clergy abuse victims and stated: "I reach out with deep sadness to the victims. Certainly in the name of the church, I ask their forgiveness and offer an apology for the harm that has been done to them." In response to Bishop Mulvee's apology, the attorney for the victims, Timohty J. Conlon, stated: "Your heartfelt condolences in reaching out to my clients means more to them than anything I could bring; it's more than you had to do, and it's the right thing. I applaud your courage." (Providence Bishop Robert E. Mulvee Announces the Historic Settlement and Apologizes to the 36 Victims of Sexual Abuse by Members of the Clergy, by Jennifer Levitz, Providence Journal-Bulletin, September 10, 2002).

The Diocese of Providence accepts their responsibility for the abuse that occurred within our ranks and will support survivors as long as necessary. It has paid over $21 million in legal settlements to victims of clergy sex abuse. It has provided and continues to provide millions of dollars for direct financial assistance for victims' counseling. Programs are in place that continue to reach out to victims and their families and provide the resources for healing.

The recent Attorney General's Report is the result of the Diocese of Providence's unprecedented and voluntary agreement to extraordinary transparency. So, it is critical at the outset to state what the Report is, and importantly, what it is not. Despite how the Attorney General now frames this as an "investigation", the Report did not result from legal compulsion, criminal or civil administrative proceedings, or coercion by governmental power. This voluntary records review was made possible only because the diocese freely granted access to the Attorney General through a 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), set aside its valid legal objections and willingly endured six-and-a half years of persistent requests for over seventy-five years of material.

The continued presence of child sexual abuse in so many other institutions motivated the diocese to agree to the unprecedented transparency into its history and records. We know the effectiveness of our efforts to protect children and we hope that a broader societal good could come from our experience, both the failures and the successes in the wake of a tragic but bygone era. This issue is not unique to churches – it occurs throughout society and others' prevention efforts could be strengthened by our lessons learned. (See attached listing of sex abuse cases in RI Public Schools since 2019).

The Diocese of Providence has a lengthy, concrete record of working tirelessly for decades to ensure that the Church is safe for children and youth, reaching out to victims of abuse and their families with resources for healing, and continuing our efforts for justice in ways that are consistent with our continued mission and the pastoral ministry of the Church. The Church has a sincere commitment to the emotional and spiritual well-being of individuals whom the crime of childhood sexual abuse has impacted, no matter how long ago the crime occurred.

The Diocese is also committed to the goal of protecting children and ending child sexual abuse by aggressively and promptly responding to allegations of sexual abuse, carefully screening clergy, employees, and volunteers, and educating adults and children about the signs of abuse and how to report that abuse to civil authorities. The Diocese of Providence has implemented programs and policies to prevent harm for decades. It continues to work vigilantly to ensure our Church is safe for everyone, especially children and youth.

Since 1993, the Diocese has established an Office of Compliance to oversee our efforts in child protection. Mr. Kevin O'Brien, a former Rhode Island State Police major, is the current Co-Director of Compliance. Retired state police Lt. Col. Robert Creamer was appointed as Co-Director to succeed Major O'Brien in December. (RI State Police second-in-command hired by Providence Diocese. Mark Reynolds, The Providence Journal, December 2, 2025).

In an op-ed in the Providence Journal, Major O'Brien stated, "These policies and procedures have produced significant and positive results. But this is not to say that we are complacent with our effort, or that bad people still can't do bad things. However, significant and measurable progress has been made, as evidenced by statistics showing that the overwhelming majority of claims are from behavior many decades ago." ("Church in R.I. has long fought abuse, Kevin O'Brien, the Providence Journal, August 25, 2018).

The Office of Compliance continues to educate all diocesan employees at every level and ministry about child protection, from holding Safe Environment Trainings to requiring mandatory background checks for those who work with children. The Office of Compliance also impartially investigates each complaint received.

The Diocese of Providence also established a Diocesan Child Protection Advisory Board. The Board functions as a confidential consultative body to the Bishop in assessing allegations of sexual abuse of minors and determining a cleric's suitability for ministry as necessary. Comprised of both Catholic and non-Catholic members, the majority of the board members are professional lay persons not employed by the Diocese.

Current lay board members are: The Honorable Stephen Isherwood (Associate Judge, Rhode Island District Court); Michael Quinn (retired Rhode Island State Police Major); Karen Pinch (former Town Manager, Town of Richmond and retired Rhode Island State Police Lt. Colonel); Bishop Jeffrey A. Williams, D.Min. (Pastor, The Kings Cathedral); Kevin Barry (retired Rhode Island State Police Lt. Colonel); and Dr. Sherrie Sharp (board certified child psychiatrist).

The late Dennis J. Roberts II, former Attorney General of Rhode Island, served as a Chair of the Board. He stated:. "Recent national and international events, however, distort- and in some instances, ignore - the crisis history and the demonstrated and effective responses of our diocese. For someone who has spent his life supporting the rule of law and enforcing it with justice for all, including the victims, it is disturbing to see the work of myself and the members of the Board and the Diocese being mischaracterized by a few. The people of the State of Rhode Island and, for that matter, Catholics and non-Catholics together, may be assured that in the Diocese of Providence there has been a thorough, zealous and ongoing following of this problem since it was first discovered. Fortunately, in recent years the incidences seem to have reduced. However, wherever they appear, they will be vigorously followed and dealt with." (Dennis I. Roberts II, "Diocese has pursued justice zealously," The Providence Journal, February 11, 2019).

Addressing this issue has not been motivated by threats of civil lawsuits, which drain resources from other important ministries. We have confronted this issue because it is the right thing to do. The Rhode Island Catholic Conference, however, expresses our deep concern for the proposed legislation, which complicates and impedes the administration of justice and does little to protect victims.

A basic principle of American law, statutes of limitations ensure fairness in our legal system by requiring lawsuits to be filed promptly. Without them, non-profits and Churches could face lawsuits alleging abuse from several decades ago. It is nearly impossible for an institution that did not commit the abuse to defend against a lawsuit from thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty years past because, over time, witnesses' memories become unreliable, evidence is lost or never found, and in many instances, perpetrators or witnesses may be deceased.

Civil cases have a much lower burden of proof than criminal law cases. An alleged abuser may not even be alive, but a third party, like his or her employer, could be sued even after the perpetrator, witnesses, or clear evidence is long gone. Removing this fairness from our judicial system would make it impossible for any organization that cares for children to defend itself in court many years later.

The proposal to eliminate statute of limitations is so extreme that it is not surprising that Rhode Island courts have already concluded that such an application would be violative of constitutional due process. Over the past five years, five states have struck down similar legislation attempting to revive time-barred childhood sexual abuse claims, including New Hampshire, Maine, Colorado, Kentucky, and Utah.

California Governor Gavin Newsom last year vetoed similar legislation stating: "Statutes of limitations recognize that, as time passes, physical and documentary evidence may be lost and witnesses may die, no longer remember key facts, or otherwise no longer be available to testify, potentially prejudicing the ability of a party to present its case in court." (Now That the Focus Isn't on the Catholic Church, Newsom Opposes Easing the Statute of Limitations for Sexual Abuse, Tom McFeely, National Catholic Register, March 25, 2025).

In April 2025, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved the largest sex abuse settlement in U.S. history agreeing to pay $4 billion to victims abused as children in county-run juvenile facilities and foster homes. (L.A. County approves $4-billion sex abuse settlement, largest in U.S. history by Rebecca Ellis, Staff Writer Los Angeles Times, April 29, 2025).

A report titled "Childhood Sexual Assault: Implications for California Public Agencies," released by the State of California Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), indicated that some state school districts are now facing "catastrophic fiscal consequences" as a result passage of legislation that opened a legal window allowing adults to sue over childhood sexual abuse dating back decades, overwhelming school districts statewide.

Last month the L.A. Unified School District board voted to issue 3,200 preliminary layoff notices. (LAUSD board approves up to 657 layoffs. Budget at 'breaking point,' Supt. Carvalho says, by Howard Blume Los Angeles Times Staff Writer, Feb. 17, 2026). Additionally last month, the Los Angeles school board approved an additional $250 million in bonds for sexual misconduct payouts. (LAUSD borrowing $250 million to settle sex abuse claims — on top of earlier half billion, by Howard Blume, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer, Feb. 21, 2026)

Likewise in Maryland, where legislation similar to H. 7200 was passed last year, it has been estimated that the State of Maryland is facing a potential liability between $3 billion and $4 billion. (State faces potentially budget-busting payouts related to claims of abuse in state facilities. Bryan P. Sears, Maryland Matters, January 22, 2025)

Maryland Department of Legislative Services budget analyst David Romans recently stated: "Not included in the budget outlook is potential lawsuit settlements related to the Child Victims Act, a 2023 law that lifted the 20-year statute of limitations for public and private entities accused of sexual abuse, essentially allowing victims to file suit at any time. If all the current suits that have been filed against the state under the law were settled for the maximum amount, the state could face a bill of almost $10.7 billion. There are roughly 12,000 claims filed against the state, each with a potential maximum liability of $890,000. The potential liability equals almost 40% of the fiscal 2027 general fund budget." (Moore's budget fixes current deficit, but analysts pessimistic about future, Bryan P. Sears, Maryland Matters, January 27, 2026)

In a landmark ruling in Washington State in 2018, the state's responsibility expanded beyond the period when officials have custody of foster children and another Washington State Supreme Court ruling last month that expanded the statute of limitations for some claims have opened the state to nearly $500 Million in payouts. In June 2024, "an actuary estimated the state faced $2.5 billion in liability from pending claims, straining an already-reeling state budget."

It's also part of what's contributed to a sharp rise in the state paying out huge sums of money in response to a deluge of lawsuits alleging a range of misconduct. Washington state taxpayers have covered about half a billion dollars in legal claims in the past year alone. The conduct alleged goes back as far as the 1950s. (Washington state lawsuit payouts skyrocket to more than $500M in past year, Claims against the state's Department of Children, Youth and Families are driving a spike in cases. Jake Goldstein-Street, Washington State Standard, June 17, 2025)

As it has in the case of the Catholic Church in other states, legislation such as H. 7200 is likely to result in numerous lawsuits against the State of Rhode Island, its cities and towns, and school districts placing serious financial stress on state and local finances. Nearly forty Catholic dioceses across the United States have gone into bankruptcy as a result of the passage of legislation similar to H. 7200. Just last week the Catholic Diocese of El Paso filed for bankruptcy to shield itself from massive potential liabilities in cases stemming from priest abuse of children stretching back to the 1950s. (Diocese of El Paso files bankruptcy amid lawsuits alleging child abuse dating to 1950s, Austin American-Statesman [Austin, TX] March 6, 2026)

The funds needed to settle the lawsuits come from the Diocese and the parishes where the alleged abuse occurred. In other states, retroactive changes to the law resulted in dioceses declaring bankruptcy and placing parishes, schools, and charitable ministries at risk. In short, this legislation will severely undermine the Catholic community's ministries in Rhode Island and is likely to result in lost jobs and impaired programs and services to the poor and needy.

The most obvious practical result of bills such as this is to generate lawsuits against the Church and other institutions both public and private. This will result in millions of dollars in legal fees for plaintiffs' attorneys. The proposed retroactive change in the law does nothing to enhance the security of young people today.

As noted in a Wall Street Journal editorial on the effect of such lawsuits upon the Boy Scouts of America, "Insurer court filings note that when BSA filed for bankruptcy, it was a defendant in 275 cases and had been notified of a potential 1,400 more. BSA now faces 95,000 claims. Behind this assault is a sophisticated new tort machine that leverages Wall Street litigation funding, third-party brokers to collect and commoditize claims, and sweeping online marketing that recruits and coaches' claimants. This is the new mass tort industry." (Looting the Boy Scouts: The mass tort industry gins up thousands of dubious claims, Wall Street Journal, March 3, 2021).

In fact a Los Angeles Times exposé of the fraudulent practices of many law firms documented the use of ads, recruiters, and some firms even offered to pay individuals to file fraudulent claims alleging sexual abuse as children, knowing Los Angeles County could not verify the claims and would settle them. Such advertisements by law firms are already appearing in Rhode Island in anticipation of this legislation. (In the biggest sex abuse settlement in U.S. history, some claim they were paid to sue, by Rebecca Ellis, Los Angeles Times, October 2, 2025).

The Los Angeles Times expose of the fraudulent practices of this law stated: "Law firms have hunted aggressively for lucrative cases, flooding social media with ads and quietly tapping third parties to find former occupants of county-run juvenile halls and foster homes. The effort has met little resistance from L.A. County officials, who say they threw out relevant records long ago. This spring, the county agreed to pay $4 billion to settle thousands of sex abuse claims dating back to the 1950s without taking depositions or knowing the names of thousands of plaintiffs. Rather, the vetting had been done almost entirely by attorneys who stand to walk away with more than a billion dollars in fees." (In the biggest sex abuse settlement in U.S. history, some claim they were paid to sue, by Rebecca Ellis, Los Angeles Times, October 2, 2025).

In January 2026, the Los Angeles district attorney requested a six-month pause in payments amid a criminal probe into allegations that some plaintiffs were paid to sue and make false claims. (L.A. County to pause some payouts amid investigations into $4-billion sex abuse settlement, by Rebecca Ellis, Staff Writer Los Angeles Times, Jan. 29, 2026). Also in January, the State Bar of California announced an investigation of law firms that represent thousands of victims. (State Bar investigating law firm at center of L.A. County's $4-billion sex abuse settlement, by Rebecca Ellis, Staff Writer Los Angeles Times, Jan. 21, 2026).

In the 2019 legislative session, amid extensive public debate and publicity, the R.I. Catholic Conference supported the passage of legislation in recognition that minor victims may need extra time to initiate litigation. Ultimately, the General Assembly enacted an unprecedented and exceptionally long, prospective 35-year statute of limitations for civil litigation concerning child sexual abuse along with a 7-year discovery rule in recognition that minor victims may need extra time to initiate litigation.

The Senate and House Leadership lauded the bill's passage at that time. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Robert Craven stated: "This brings justice to people who deserve it." ("R.I. General Assembly passes bill to extend sex-abuse statute of limitations," Kathy Gregg, The Providence Journal, June 26, 2019). At a bill signing ceremony in August 2019, then-Governor Gina Raimondo and the bill's sponsors praised the legislation. ("Sex-abuse survivors celebrate bill signing," Brian Amaral, The Providence Journal, August 5, 2019).

Seven years later, House Bill No. 7200 proposes to eviscerate statutes of limitation – prospectively and retroactively. Esteemed former Rhode Island Chief Justice Joseph Weisberger best summed up the balancing of an individual's right to seek redress, the need for a defendant to be allowed a fair defense, and for courts and society to have finality: "The right to be free of stale claims in time comes to prevail over the right to prosecute them." Anthony v. Abbott Laboratories, 490 A.2d 43, 49 (R.I. 1985); see also Farris v. Compton, 652 A.2d 49, 57 (D.C. 1994) ("Because time erases evidence, it becomes at some juncture fundamentally unfair to require a defendant to respond to allegations so stale that he cannot possibly marshal an effective defense to them.").

House Bill No. 7200 would remove and undermine all the legal principles that promote fairness and equity cited by Chief Justice Joseph Weisberger and other courts throughout the nation, including the United States Supreme Court. Moreover, it is difficult to conceive of a more complete repudiation of the prevailing principles of statutes of limitations than the retroactive authorization of claims that have been barred for decades, which is what House Bill No. 7200 proposes. It comes as little surprise that courts have already concluded that such extreme measures would violate constitutional due process.

Statutes of limitations are designed to enable claims to be investigated and decided fairly while facts are fresh, memories are vivid, and relevant evidence is still available. Limitation periods also guarantee that judges and juries will not be so far removed from circumstances surrounding a case that they cannot interpret the evidence considering those circumstances. They also ensure that false and misrepresented claims do not advance.

Statutes of limitations promote fairness and closure by preventing stale claims in which evidence is lost, memories change, and witnesses disappear; encouraging plaintiffs to assert claims promptly; guarding against false claims; carrying out a strong public policy interest in promoting closure, allowing defendants an ability to plan for the future without uncertainty inherent in potential liability, and ensuring that contemporary standards will not judge long-past actions.

The problems go well beyond difficulties of adducing necessary evidence. There is inherent unfairness and risk of error in asking a jury in 2026 to decide whether actions taken in 1957 or 1967 reflected a lack of due care (or for that matter asking a 2061 jury to assess today's behavior). Juries are asked to apply their common sense and experience in adjudicating claims of negligence, and jurors are the product of their time.

The understanding of child abuse in the mid-1960s was not remotely comparable to the understanding of the problem today. Professional psychiatrists viewed the problem differently, as no doubt would have jurors. It would have been one thing to ask a jury in the mid-1960s to apply their reason and experience in considering whether contemporaneous actions in this area were negligent; it would be quite another to ask a jury in 2026 to second-guess decisions made well over a half-century ago. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that many of the jurors who would be asked to hear such a case today would not have been born at the time of the decisions and events they would be asked to judge

Finally, the sober reality is that House Bill No. 7200 does nothing to protect children and the vulnerable from exploitation and abuse despite what the sponsors of the legislation claim. There is no way to rewrite or erase that sad history or the suffering caused by sexually abusive Catholic clergy. However, House Bill No. 7200 should not diminish the efforts of thousands of people who have stood together and responded effectively to that crisis. Dedicated clergy, law enforcement officials, Catholic school teachers, involved parents and students, community leaders, and other faithful members of our diocesan community all worked together to achieve safe environments in our diocese today. Results happen when everyone with an interest in protecting children works together cooperatively, without ego or agenda, but with genuine compassion and real understanding. That cooperation and singular focus have been the reality in the Diocese of Providence for decades.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island Catholic Conference opposes House Bill No. 7200.

The Reverend Bernard A. Healey
Director
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# Recent Abuse in Rhode Island Public Schools

**Bristol-Warren School District**

**Mt. Hope High**

- **2020 – Temporary teacher's assistant arrested & charged with 2 counts of indecent solicitation of a child and 2 counts of counts of electronically disseminating indecent material to a minor** (2 indecency charges later dismissed, but was sentenced to serve two years consecutively for the remaining charges in July 2023): https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/article/Boys-Girls-Clubs-and-Sexual-Abuse-Alexander-15478802.php

**Kickemuit Middle School**

- **2015 – Former Kickemuit Middle School custodian pleads guilty to multiple counts of child molestation involving three victims under 14, including student:** https://www.ri.gov/press/view/23811

**Burrillville Public Schools**

**Austin T. Levy School**

- **2022 – Former substitute teacher charged with child molestation** (occurred between Sept. 1, 2011 – July 1, 2012): https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/northwest/former-burrillville-ep-teacher-charged-with-child-molestation/

**Burrillville High**

- **2021 – Two BHS students arrested for distribution of child pornography**: https://nrinow.news/2021/07/03/two-bhs-students-arrested-for-distribution-of-child-pornography/
- **2020 – 19-year-old student with 16 counts of indecent solicitation of a child and ten counts of electronically disseminating indecent material to minors** (18 victims, 1 of 5 students arrested over charges related to cyber-harassment, child pornography and dissemination of materials): https://nrinow.news/2020/03/26/report-from-investigation-of-teen-pornography-in-burrillville-points-to-18-victims/
- **2017 – Police discovered pornographic pictures of more than 100 teenage girls from town:** https://www.wpri.com/news/crime/juvenile-charged-in-burrillville-hs-dropbox-case/

**Chariho School District**

**Chariho High**

- **2022 – RI Supreme Court upholds ex-coach's classification as high-risk sex offender; Convicted of Possession of Child Pornography and Solicitation of a Child:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/courts/2022/01/26/former-chariho-high-coach-sex-offender-status-affirmed-court/9224451002/
    - Charged with indecent solicitation of a child and possession of child pornography. Pleaded no contest to indecent solicitation and received a five-year suspended sentence in state court. He was ordered not to contact the teenager, to register as a sex offender, and undergo sex-offender counseling. In addition, Matteson pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court to receiving, possessing and distributing child pornography after state police discovered images of nude prepubescent males, some appearing as young as 5, engaged in sexual acts with men.
    - Released from prison in July 2017 and remains under court oversight through 2027.
- **Another teacher, John Wedlock, of South Kingstown, also has been charged in the case** (Wedlock turning himself to the police and an audit of devices led to the arrest of the above-mentioned ex-coach; no updated on Wedlock found since 2014).

**Hope Valley Elementary**

- **2022 – Custodian arrested on child pornography charges:** https://fallriverreporter.com/elementary-school-and-library-custodian-arrested-released-on-bail-after-child-pornography-charge/

**Cranston School District**

**Arlington Elementary**

- **2021 – Former Cranston teacher asks court to overturn his conviction for sexually assaulting teen:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/courts/2021/05/13/former-cranston-teacher-matthew-sheridan-wants-conviction-overturned/5073523001/
    - In 2017, was found guilty in the 2003 sexual assault of a teenage boy.
    - Also taught at Arlington Elementary and the Park View middle schools

**Cranston High West**

- **2023 – Teacher convicted of sexually assaulting five female students avoids jail time:** https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/west-bay/former-cranston-teacher-convicted-of-sexually-assaulting-students-avoids-jail-time/

**Western Hills Middle**

- **2022 – Custodian arrested on child pornography charges - possession and transfer:** https://turnto10.com/news/local/cranston-man-faces-child-pornography-charges#

**Cumberland School Department**

**Ashton Elementary**

- **2020 – Special education teacher already facing molestation charges of non-students faces new charges involving a student**: https://turnto10.com/news/local/hearing-set-for-lincoln-man-accused-of-child-molestation
    - **2024—Jury finds former Cumberland teacher guilty of molestation:** https://www.valleybreeze.com/news/jury-finds-former-cumberland-teacher-guilty-of-molestation/article_e73a055e-03db-11ef-9e7b-af80185c7ff0.html *(a Lincoln man has been found guilty in Providence County Superior Court of multiple counts of second-degree child molestation against three victims between 2016 and 2017…three girls under the age of 14…)*

**East Greenwich Public Schools**

**East Greenwich High**

- **2022 – Unwelcome kisses, touching and texting: report details allegations against volleyball coach**: https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/education/2022/04/12/east-greenwich-volleyball-assistant-coach-sexually-harassed-team-years/7289953001/
- Another coach – the head coach (Amaral) – was also fired after the investigation found that he didn't meet his responsibilities as coach, including his own "extremely inappropriate interactions" with the student who brought the complaint.

**Eldredge Elementary**

- **2013 – Bus monitor arrested following state police child porn sweep:** https://turnto10.com/archive/parents-meet-with-school-officials-following-child-porn-arrest#

**Davies Career and Technical High School**

- **2023 – Teacher resigns after allegations of inappropriate conduct with student:** https://www.abc6.com/davies-school-teacher-resigns-after-allegations-of-inappropriate-conduct-with-student/
- **2013 – Teacher accused of groping and kissing two female students:** https://www.abc6.com/davies-teacher-accused-of-assaulting-two-students/

**East Providence School District**

**East Providence High School**

- **2018 – High school athletes disciplined after alleged sexually-explicit prank, drug use:** https://turnto10.com/news/local/only-on-10-high-school-athletes-disciplined-after-alleged-obscene-prank

**Foster-Glocester Schools**

**2015 – Glocester bus monitor charged with child pornography**
https://www.abc6.com/glocester-bus-monitor-arrested-for-child-porn/

2025—**Ponagansett Teacher Indicted on Two Counts of Third-Degree Sexual Assault; Officials Allegedly Ignored Previous Reports:**
https://www.valleybreeze.com/news/superintendent-says-officials-were-unaware-of-concerns-with-teacher/article_0cf11fb6-4a53-4a8a-8546-cf3487ffdafc.html
https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/northwest/superintendent-ri-state-police-investigating-ponaganset-teacher/
https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/northwest/ponaganset-teacher-accused-of-sexually-harassing-former-student/
https://www.foxnews.com/us/rhode-island-teacher-accused-sexting-kissing-high-school-boy

**Middletown Public Schools**

**Joseph H Gaudet Middle School**

- **2019 – Middletown school custodian charged with indecent exposure:** https://turnto10.com/news/local/middle-school-custodian-charged-with-indecent-exposure-following-field-hockey-game
    - Accused of entering a female locker room during the game, rummaging through the player's belongings, and taking a picture of genitalia with a player's cellphone.

**Newport Public Schools**

**Newport Area Career and Technical Center.**

- **2021 – Newport teacher charged with second-degree sexual assault involving 16-year-old student:** https://www.newportri.com/story/news/local/2021/10/26/newport-teacher-steven-kalble-seeks-jury-trial-sexual-assault-case/6125233001/

**North Kingstown School District**

- **2022 – North Kingstown residents scold School Committee over handling of misconduct allegations:** https://turnto10.com/i-team/north-kingstown-rhode-island-school-committee-allegations-inappropriate-behavior-aaron-thomas-may-10-2022

Davisville Middle School

- **2023 – Teacher accused of stalking pre-teen resigns**: https://www.wpri.com/target-12/north-kingstown-teacher-accused-of-stalking-pre-teen-to-resign-avoid-termination/, https://turnto10.com/news/local/north-kingstown-teacher-investigation-north-kingstown-school-department-statement-jan-13-2023
- **2022 – A coach accused of 'creepy' behavior – uncomfortably watching girls, asking girls to 'twerk', touching female students**: https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/crime/2022/07/08/north-kingstown-school-coaches-accused-behavior-girls-uncomfortable/7831575001/

North Kingstown High

- **2024 – RI judge upholds firing of teacher for distasteful student nicknames, who allegedly kissed student:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/04/11/judge-rules-north-kingstown-school-district-had-cause-to-fire-teacher-over-distasteful-nicknames/73274932007/

- **2024 – U.S. Attorney's Office closes investigation in case of coach criminally charged with molestation and assault of students**: https://www.independentri.com/news/article_edc54e34-c078-11ee-8114-331c71325de5.html, https://www.seattletimes.com/sports/nba/former-coach-criminally-charged-in-naked-fat-test-case/
    - **Federal probe finds NKSD failed students in 'naked fat test' scandal** (scandal with this coach): https://www.wpri.com/target-12/federal-probe-finds-nk-school-district-failed-students-in-naked-fat-test-scandal/

- **2023 – Teacher accused of sexually assaulting students, found to not be guilty of Title IX violations**, school department says its former interim superintendent concluded that the teacher was not at any point a threat to the students: https://turnto10.com/news/local/north-kingstown-teacher-investigation-north-kingstown-school-department-statement-jan-13-2023
- **2022 – Coach accused of favoring certain female students while making demeaning comments to others, inappropriate touching:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/crime/2022/07/08/north-kingstown-school-coaches-accused-behavior-girls-uncomfortable/7831575001/
    - **2022 – Citing Thomas investigation, Auger resigns as NK Superintendent:** https://www.independentri.com/news/article_f20b562a-9fc1-11ec-91c9-5f691a90c0dc.html

- **2022 – Lawsuit accuses North Kingstown of failing to protect student after sexual assault by a student athlete:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/education/2022/06/24/former-north-kingstown-high-school-student-sues-lack-protection-sexual-assault/7711941001/

**North Providence School District**

**2019 – Elementary school teacher (*Stephen Olney Elementary* School, *Centredale Elementary* School) arrested for child pornography:** https://turnto10.com/news/local/teacher-in-north-providence-arrested-for-child-pornography#

**Ricci Middle School**

- **2020 – Teacher arrested and charged with rape and two counts of indecent assault and battery of a minor child:** https://patch.com/rhode-island/barrington/north-providence-teacher-charged-sexual-assault, https://www.valleybreeze.com/news/officials-short-on-information-related-to-moniz-case/article_822c2200-b5a3-5fa1-b83a-abac64642499.html

**Birchwood Middle School**

- **2025 - State Police Investigating "Inappropriate Posts" Made About Underage Girls Allegedly Made by Birchwood Middle School Teacher:** https://www.golocalprov.com/news/state-police-investigating-inappropriate-posts-about-underage-girls-alleged

**North Smithfield Schools**

- **2010 — Teacher and Coach Charged with Indecent Solicitation of Children; Possession of Child Pornography in case involving female students:** https://turnto10.com/archive/teacher-coach-accused-of-sexting-minors

**Pawtucket School Department**

- **2021 - Pawtucket schools sued for allegedly retaliating against social worker who reported girls' sexual abuse claims:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/courts/2021/12/03/pawtucket-schools-sued-allegedly-retaliating-against-whistleblower-sexual-harassment-suelem-rosalino/8837647002/
    - Worked at **Joseph Jenks Middle School** – accuses Jenks' assistant principal, Robin Sweezy, of berating her as a "good for nothing [expletive] stirrer"

**Joseph Jenks Middle School**

- **2019 – School staffer charged with sending indecent photo to 13-year-old girl:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/2019/03/21/school-staffer-charged-with-sending-indecent-photo-to-13-year-old-girl/5653969007/

**Shea High School**

- **2014 – Shea High teacher resigns after child pornography charge:** https://www.valleybreeze.com/news/shea-teacher-resigns-after-pornography-charge/article_71109132-4666-5cda-a1e3-7c625cd97996.html

**Tolman High School**

- **2014 – Fired Tolman High School coach arraigned on multiple child pornography charges; filmed himself engaged in sex acts with teens:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/crime/2014/09/20/20140920-tolman-high-school-coach-fired-amid-child-pornography-allegations-ece/35305988007/
  https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/2014/09/22/20140922-police-former-pawtucket-wrestling-coach-filmed-himself-in-sex-acts-with-teens-ece/35314609007/

**Providence Public Schools**

**Esek Hopkins Middle School**

- **2023 – Teacher charged with multiple counts of child molestation of multiple students at middle school** (no updates, no plea recorded)**:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/crime/2023/03/03/esek-hopkins-middle-school-teacher-charged-with-child-molestation/69964998007/

- **2016 – Esek Hopkins Middle School aide charged with sexually assaulting autistic boy:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/2016/01/11/providence-teacher-s-aide-charged/32763005007/

**Harry Kizirian Elementary**

- **2024 – Gym Teacher James Duffy Convicted of Second Degree Child Molestation Against Elementary School Students** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/courts/2024/08/16/former-providence-gym-teacher-james-duffy-sentenced-for-touching-students/74828857007/

- **2019 – Ex-principal admits failing to report abuse:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/courts/2019/08/19/former-providence-principal-admits-failing-to-report-gym-teachers-alleged-abuse/4423744007/
    - In January 2018, District Court Judge James Caruolo convicted LeMar of a single misdemeanor count of failing to report alleged sexual abuse of a child to DCYF within 24 hours under a new state reporting law.
    - Caruolo sentenced LeMar to a one-year suspended term with probation and ordered her to perform 150 hours of community service at a shelter for women who had been sexually abused.
    - LeMar had appealed that conviction to Superior Court.
    - Related to this **2017 case of teacher charged in molestation and assault:** https://www.wpri.com/news/providence-teacher-faces-additional-charges-in-child-molestation-case/
- **2017 – Providence Elementary School Teacher charged with six counts of second-degree child molestation on four 11-year-old girls:** https://www.wpri.com/news/providence-teacher-faces-additional-charges-in-child-molestation-case/

**Nathaniel Green Middle School**

- **2024 — Middle School Teacher Arrested for Raping Female Student; Creating Child Pornography** https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/09/20/metro/providence-teacher-rape-child-porn-student/
- https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/crime/2024/09/23/providence-teacher-charged-with-sex-assault-child-pornography/75351437007/; https://www.wpri.com/target-12/police-arrest-providence-teacher-for-child-porn-sexual-assault/amp/

**School district administrator**

- **2024 – Schools administrator found guilty of simple assault and battery, for fondling student's foot**: https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/courts/2024/01/27/judge-sentences-ex-city-school-administrator-who-fondled-teens-foot/72356520007/

**School bus monitor**

- **2024 – Providence bus monitor accused of assaulting student**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLsN6CTIBGo (Mary E. Fogarty Elementary student)

**Charter School: Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College Charter High School (RINI)**

- **2023 – Teacher Francis Costillo charged with sexually assaulting student multiple times:** https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/providence-charter-school-teacher-charged-with-sexually-assaulting-16-year-old-student/
- https://turnto10.com/news/local/former-teacher-at-rhode-island-nurses-institute-middle-college-accused-of-sexually-assaulting-student-june-23-2023

**Trinity Academy for Performing Arts**

- **2024 – Providence teacher resigns after misconduct allegations; was flagged for previous allegations from another school:** https://www.wpri.com/target-12/providence-teacher-resigns-after-misconduct-allegations/

**Warwick School District**

**Hoxie Elementary School, Pilgrim High School**

- **2019 – Warwick teacher, coach charged with possession of child pornography:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/2019/04/02/warwick-teacher-coach-charged-with-possession-of-child-pornography/5551272007/
  - Convicted in December 2021 for possession of child porn, is registered sex offender: https://www.icrimewatch.net/offenderdetails.php?OfndrID=10691844&AgencyID=56404
- **2017 – Cunningham Elementary School [Pawtucket Schools] social worker arrested on child molestation charge:** https://turnto10.com/news/local/warwick-man-arrested-on-child-molestation-charge
  - He served as the principal of Broad Rock Middle School in South Kingstown and the assistant principal of the Gilbert Stuart Middle School in Providence before coming to Pawtucket.
  - In addition, he was the owner/operator of the Shawomet Alternative School for special education students in Warwick before it closed down.

**Westerly Public Schools**

**Westerly High School**

- **2023 –Westerly school employee indicted on three counts of third-degree sexual assault against a minor female student:** https://turnto10.com/news/local/sean-tormey-third-degree-sexual-assault-charges-indictment-former-westerly-high-school-staffer-employee-new-law-student-pretrial-conference-august-15-2023

- **2025 – Westerly HS Employee Admits to Sexually Assaulting Student; Pleaded No Contest to two counts of third-degree sexual assault:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/crime/2026/01/07/ex-westerly-ri-school-employee-pleads-no-contest-to-sexually-assaulting-student/88068211007/

**West Warwick Public Schools**

**Maisie E. Quinn Elementary School**

- **2022 – West Warwick school employee accused of inappropriately touching pre-K student is on leave:** https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2022/04/15/west-warwick-pre-kindergarten-employee-investigated-after-allegation/7330343001/