

SNAP: State of Wisconsin granted professional licenses to four priests with histories of abuse

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It is being reported today that at least [four ex-priests with histories of abusing children were granted or renewed licenses](#) to practice social work and related professions in Wisconsin under Governor Scott Walker. All four have been identified by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee as priests with substantiated histories of sexual abuse or misconduct.

While Walker is moving to have their licenses revoked, the Wisconsin Attorney General should investigate and determine how this happened.

For years the [Wisconsin AG has been asked to review and investigate](#) the problem of pedophile clergy. The office could start with the tens of thousands of pages of court-ordered released church files, depositions, and testimony from all five dioceses in Wisconsin.

Months ago, both Governor Walker and the current Wisconsin AG, Brad Schimel, were asked to support the Child Victims Act, which would reform the archaic and predator-friendly state child sex abuse civil statute. The [Governor suggested he supported the provisions of the bill](#) but needed to review the language of the bill. Both Governor Walker and AG Schimel need to let survivors and Wisconsin families

know where they stand on the legislation.

Following a groundbreaking Pennsylvania Grand Jury report in August, fourteen states, along with the District of Columbia, have opened investigations on clerical abuse and cover up. The US Department of Justice has also opened a federal probe in Pennsylvania, and has put all dioceses in the US, [including Wisconsin](#), on notice to not to destroy any abuse-related files, documents or internal communications.

In Wisconsin, the need for an investigation is longstanding and obvious:

*At least [100 never identified clergy](#) with allegations of child sexual abuse to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee have not been reviewed for prosecution by state law enforcement officials.

*Just before leaving for his current post in Pittsburgh, former Green Bay Bishop David Zubik ordered the [destruction of all abuse-related evidence](#) of at least 51 known clerical child molesters.

*A national study revealed that the La Crosse diocese has “cleared” more priests with abuse allegations than any diocese in the United States, at ten times the national average.

So far, AG Schimel has refused to say whether he is or is not conducting any kind of examination. However, his public comments on the matter [are not promising](#).

During one recent debate, the Attorney General said he is not going to “indict by headline.” And when asked about Bishops who callously covered up child abuse, like Bishop Richard Sklba of Milwaukee, AG Schimel said that people make “mistakes.” That does not sound like much of a law enforcement response to child rape and sexual abuse.

Wisconsin citizens need to know the scope and consequences of clerical abuse and the actions of church officials. Both Governor Walker and AG Schimel need to get an investigation underway. And they need to support the Child Victims Act.