

# Wisconsin SNAP: Survivors of clergy abuse calling on Federal authorities to investigate former Franciscan monk and his religious order for transporting children across state lines to sexually assault them

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*Group also concerned that cleric taught in a Green Bay diocese grade school from 1999-2010 after being credibly accused of child sex crimes in Mississippi*

Survivors of sexual abuse by clergy in Wisconsin and Mississippi are calling upon federal authorities to investigate a former Franciscan and his religious order for violating federal child sex abuse laws.

In a detailed investigation by the Associated Press published this week, three men who say they were raped and physically abused by Paul West, 59, were brought as children to Wisconsin on multiple occasions where West sexually assaulted them.

West was a member of the Franciscan Friars Assumption, a Catholic religious order headquartered in Franklyn, Wisconsin. The alleged assaults occurred in Mississippi and Wisconsin over several years, from the mid to late 1990's. At the time, West was the principle of a Catholic grade school in Greenwood, Mississippi.

In a statement Monday, Franciscan officials confirmed that the allegations against West are credible.

Transporting a child across state lines for the purposes of committing a sex act is a federal crime punishable no less to 10 years in prison, up to life.

SNAP is also concerned that West, while still a member of his religious order, was moved by church officials to the Green Bay Diocese where he taught 5th grade at St John's Elementary School in Little Chute from 1999 to 2010, well after he was known to church officials to have sexually assaulted children in Mississippi. After his transfer, West quickly obtained a teacher's license from the State of Wisconsin.

West appears to have been released from his religious order in 2002. During his time teaching in Little Chute, however, neither the Franciscans or the Diocese of Green Bay made notifications to Wisconsin law enforcement officials, the Department of Public Instruction, or to parents at the school. West does not appear on a list of credibly accused clerics published by either the diocese of Green Bay or the Milwaukee Archdiocese. Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome ListECKI has church governance over the Franciscan Province.

Over the past nine months, according to the AP investigation, Franciscan officials have been in Mississippi attempting to obtain non-disclosure agreements from victims of West, although such agreements have been forbidden by the US Bishops abuse policy since 2002.

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(SNAP, the Survivors Network, has been providing support for victims of sexual abuse in institutional settings for 30 years. We have more than 25,000 survivors and supporters in our network. Our website is [www.SNAPnetwork.org](http://www.SNAPnetwork.org))