

Religious Investigation Services

The Child Victims Act

On February 14, 2019, former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the Child Victims Act, allowing individuals who were sexually assaulted as minors to bring civil actions against their perpetrators at any time before turning 55 years old. In addition to extending the civil statute of limitations, the new legislation created a special one-year window, starting August 14, 2019, in which victims would be allowed to pursue a lawsuit asserting an otherwise time-barred claim for child sexual abuse. On August 8, 2020, Governor Cuomo extended that period to August 14, 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

By the end of 2023, roughly 11,000 lawsuits were filed under the Child Victims Act. While there haven't been any updates to this legislation, lawmakers have advocated to make the Child Victims Act permanent by eliminating the statute of limitations, and enacting it beyond New York State.

On April 11, 2023, Maryland's Child Victims Act of 2023 was signed into law, eliminating the statute of limitations for filing a child sexual abuse claim. In doing so, Maryland was the 16th state to repeal its statute of limitations for sexual abuse claims of a minor.

What Anchin Can Do

In many cases, religious institutions are unaware of the potential claims that could be brought against them. This is often due to the fact that a large number of personnel records would have to be reviewed to ascertain the extent of the list of possible victims and sexual abusers.

Our team is experienced in assisting religious organizations and their counsel* with the review of personnel files, and can:

- Identify all personnel files that need to be reviewed,
- Review these files to identify possible sexual abusers,
- Create a database of pertinent information for each personnel file reviewed,
- Provide recommendations based on the extensive information in each file,
- Classify each personnel file based on our recommendation for further analysis, and
- Write a report that identifies all of the information that a religious organization and their counsel will need to make key decisions.

In many cases religious organizations plan to go public with a list of clergy members who they believe have sexually abused minors. It is important that the creation of this list be vetted by a third-party, independent investigator to ensure that the public can put trust in the information being shared. Anchin's report will identify the list of organization members that have been accused of sexual abuse and rank the probability that the accusation is credible.

Our team has successfully applied our experience to investigations for various religious orders. Anchin's team provides on-site review to work closely with representation for each religious order. This allows our team to efficiently coordinate our review and apply our strategic approach. Furthermore, this allows the religious order to provide real time updates for open investigations and litigation.

Use Cases

Religious order #1 – Anchin has reviewed nearly 1,600 files of deceased, active and separated personnel to identify any possible accusations or evidence of sexual abuse of a minor and/or adult. Our team:

- Created a robust database of all personnel files reviewed,
- Identified the pertinent information from each file to allow the religious order to make important decisions, and
- Produced a comprehensive report of procedures and findings.

Religious order #2 – Anchin has reviewed nearly 3,300 files of deceased, active and separated personnel to identify any possible accusations or evidence of sexual abuse of a minor and/or adult. Our team:

- Created a robust database of all personnel files reviewed,
- Constructed an inventory of all personnel files reviewed and analyzed,
- Identified the pertinent information from each file to allow the religious order to make important decisions,
- Consulted counsel to discuss each recommendation and present supporting documentation, and
- Produced a comprehensive report of procedures and findings.

**Anchin is retained by counsel to protect confidentiality and privilege.*

Contact Anchin Today!



BRIAN SANVIDGE, CIG, CFE

Principal & Leader —
Regulatory Compliance & Investigations
brian.sanvidge@anchin.com
212.840.3456



ANTHONY BRACCO, CPA/CFF, CFE, CVA, CGMA

Partner & Leader —
Litigation, Forensic & Valuation Services
anthony.bracco@anchin.com
212.840.3456

SCAN HERE
TO LEARN MORE!

