

I write this in regards to the “religious confession” in the proposed amendment.

I conclude that the term “religious confession” refers to our Catholic Church’s Sacrament of Reconciliation. This Sacrament has always been very important to the people of our Faith and even to others outside the Church, culprits and victims alike, for about 2,000 years now. No doubt this Sacrament has proved time and time again to work perfectly well in healing those who have done wrong. However, a minister of religion reporting people’s confessions to the authorities for the sake of preventing child sexual abuse is too much of a stretch that causes more harm than good.

First of all, a person who has committed child sexual abuse and confesses it to a minister of religion is already feeling remorse for his/her actions. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, one cannot receive forgiveness if he/she does not feel guilty and desires to change. This is a requirement in order to receive forgiveness from God the Father. A person who continuously commits child sexual abuse would not even consider confessing his/her crimes to begin with. The same can be said of other types of crimes. One would not ask for forgiveness if he/she does not regret committing their crimes, but in the case of “religious confession,” the perpetrator regrets committing his/her crime and wholeheartedly seeks forgiveness, healing, and the strength to do better next time.

Secondly, reporting religious confessions does not prevent child sexual abuse. As stated before, the perpetrator would not confess committing child sexual abuse if he/she did not feel remorse and the need to change. Since this is the case, the perpetrators of child sexual abuse would only continue to commit their crimes. If the minister of religion is to report a religious confession of child sexual abuse, the confessor, who is asking for forgiveness and making the effort to change, will be the one to be punished while the real criminals will get away with their crimes because they did not confess their crimes to the minister of religion.

I understand and respect the fact that this amendment is made for the greater good and protection of our society, but the reporting of religious confessions would remove the safe space of perpetrators to heal and change their ways for the better.

I am grateful that we are given the opportunity to have a say in this matter.