

Mr. Chairman!

My name is Ted Becker. I was born in 1938 at Mandan and grew up at Selfridge.

I was sexually abused by a priest at Selfridge when I was about 10. Five other boys told me they were also sexually abused by the same priest. All are now dead. The organization for which the priest served presented them no accountability for what happened to them. I consider myself their voices. The abuse happened to me for several years. The worst memories I have of this time in my life are of sleeping with the priest. He served as a priest at a mission at Shields and would travel from Selfridge to the mission early Sunday mornings to say mass. I was an altar boy. He would get permission from my parents to have me sleep overnight so as not to disturb my parents by picking me up early in the morning. My parents, like the vast majority of parents in the community held priests above reproach. It was believed that they were just one step below God.

You cannot begin to imagine the abuse. During my lifetime the abuse manifested itself during my sleep with such things as sensing horrid tastes in my mouth, smelling bad breath in my nostrils, feelings of tugging on my penis and so on.

I lived 60 years of my life experiencing these horrible manifestations during my sleeping hours, not understanding them and not knowing what was causing them.

Further, I lived 60 years of my life more often **NOT** trusting than trusting. I had no clue as to why I was like this other than that was "just the way I was."

About 10 years ago when the priest sexual abuse issue began to become widely public, I began to be aware of a marked increase in the frequency of these manifestations. With the loving encouragement of my children, when I was about 71-years old I sought counseling. Early on in the two-years I went to counseling I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the same disorder which many soldiers returning from battle as well as rape victims experience. Today I am telling you of some of the sexual abuse done to me by the priest. Telling you is part of my healing. My healing will continue until I die, though these sores do not heal up 100%. Scars remain. They can easily be scratched open.....like they are at this very moment.

If bill 1382 is given a do-pass, that would be a step in the right direction for the abused. I believe that any of the proposed legislations, 1382, 1384 and 1387, will give courage to the abused to step forward and among other things to seek help. If one of the "other things" is to pursue litigation, the abused would be the one to decide whether or not to do so. If another is to seek counseling, that would be even better. It was better for me. I ask you to pass any of the proposed legislations to give the abused a chance to begin their healing journey.

In closing, please allow me to pose a question to this committee! Will you do the right thing to make sure this legislature passes this much-needed legislation before I die? It is absolutely time for the organization which allowed and continues to allow this abuse to happen to be held accountable in the public arena.

Thank you, members of the Judiciary Committee, for giving me the opportunity to continue to heal!