



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0171-2002, **Version:** *

Res. No. 171

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to enact legislation that requires members of the clergy to report instances of child abuse.

By Council Members Lopez, Perkins, Seabrook and Stewart; also Council Members Jackson and Vann

Whereas, Recent newspaper reports concerning allegations that members of the clergy sexually abused children have shocked the conscience; and

Whereas, Equally disturbing are allegations that church leaders failed to report these instances of abuse, and when notified of a problem simply transferred the clergyman from one assignment to another; and

Whereas, Protection of children is of paramount importance, and no person, including members of the clergy, should be above the law; and

Whereas, Under the State's Social Services Law, certain persons, including physicians, teachers and psychologists, are mandated to report suspected child abuse; and

Whereas, The State Senate recently passed S. 6625, which requires members of the clergy to report child abuse to child protective services when a clergy member receives the information by means of a communication which is not privileged; and

Whereas, The Assembly is considering a similar bill, A 10569, which also mandates the reporting of child abuse to law enforcement authorities by clergy, except for confidential communications; and

Whereas, Manhattan's District Attorney, Robert Morgenthau, as well as many other District Attorneys throughout the city and state, support mandated reporting of child abuse by clergy and have urged church officials to report all allegations of child abuse; and

Whereas, It is imperative that clergy be held accountable for any illegal actions and that church officials, if they have knowledge of such activity, be required to report it to law enforcement officials; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to enact legislation that requires members of the clergy to report instances of child abuse.