



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Anne Nicholas
(202) 467-8714
anicholas@ncvc.org

How Institutions Respond to Child Sex Abuse

Washington, DC: The child sex abuse case at the Citadel is yet another example of institutional malaise and morally outrageous criminal cover-up. When it comes to protecting children who are exposed to predators, too many institutions aren't getting it right.

Once again, university personnel were made aware of potential abuse occurring on campus and took no action to report it to authorities. In this case, the school should have known better; it paid dearly in an earlier settlement for sexual assaults of minors.

Instead of sitting on the information, institutional administrators need to act immediately when they receive disclosures of abuse. Their first obligation should be to protect others who may come into contact with the abuser. They need to launch their own investigation and to notify appropriate law enforcement authorities. They need to remove the individual from his/her position of authority while the investigations are underway.

Reporting the crime to appropriate authorities is key. So is putting in place measures to prevent this kind of abuse from happening in the first place. Institutions-especially those working with children-need to screen all new hires to ensure they aren't predators. Internal policies need to actively encourage reporting. Finally, institutions need to respond immediately when notified of abuse.

How many more Citadels, Penn States, or Syracuses have to come to light before institutional administrators do the right thing?

Mai Fernandez
Executive Director, National Center for Victims of Crime

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