

Pledge to Create Presidential Commission into Causes and Effects of Widespread Child Sex Abuse

The undersigned organizations endorse the creation of a Presidential Commission to investigate the epidemic of child sex abuse in the United States. We hope that this will be a priority for both political parties. This has been designed to be included in both parties' platforms.

Presidential Commission to End Child Sex Abuse in the United States:

Why this is Needed:

In the United States, we have seen over and over again a failure in institutions to protect the children they work with as well as society as a whole. From the revelation of the coverup in the Catholic Church, the horrifying abuse of the Larry Nassar and USA Gymnastics case, Jeffrey Epstein and the children he trafficked, and even now more and more is coming out about the Boy Scouts of America. While there is rampant abuse within institutions, the majority of abuse happens out in greater society where there is no oversight by a larger governing body. It happens in homes and within families. Due to how widespread this issue is, it is clear that there is a problem in this country in regard to protecting our children. The faith of the American people has been shaken in trusting the institutions that surround them and their children as well as those institutions whose job it is to protect society. These are not isolated incidents, but rather ongoing systemic problems that affect all of society, and it is society and these victims who are paying the price of this abuse. It is time for the government to acknowledge and recognize the victims and survivors who have been fighting and waiting for change in this country and say, "We believe you and we will fight for change for you."

We plan to create the first "Presidential Commission to End Child Sex Abuse" in the history of the United States. We will base this work on the pioneering study by the "Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse" in Australia and the "Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse" that was done in the United Kingdom. Due to the sheer number of places in which these problems have been discovered, it is clear that sweeping reforms are needed. This can only be done if we understand the scope and depth of the problem. We will create a Commission of the leading experts and researchers in the country to end the scourge of child sex abuse.

The Commission will aim to answer the following questions:

1. What can be done to better protect children against child sex abuse in the future?
2. How can reporting of incidents of child sex abuse be better encouraged and responded to?
3. What barriers need to be removed in reporting and responding to child sex abuse?
4. What can be done to alleviate the impact that child sex abuse has on both the victim/survivor and society as a whole?



Steps to be Taken:

Research and Policy

- The first step is to gather information from as many institutions as possible on their policies, procedures and practices. The Commission's research will focus on any institution that has at any time provided activities, facilities, programs, or services of any kind that provide the means through which adults have contact with children as well as those institutions whose duty it is to take those reports and take action against the abusers.
- The research will examine the nature of child sex abuse, how it happens, where it happens, when it happens, the impact on the children and their families, and how to prevent it in the future.
- The research will also examine policies that are in place and how effective they are and how they could be improved to be more effective.

Public Hearings

- The Commission will conduct public hearings where it will hear from individuals from different institutions. These include institutions that work with children as well as institutions that bar access to justice for the victims and survivors. Those include institutions like the FBI, the police force, the criminal and civil justice systems, and the family courts. If survivors would like to be in a public setting they will be welcomed as well to share their stories to educate the public on their experiences.

Private Sessions

- The Commission will conduct private hearings where it will hear from victims and survivors as they share sensitive information that will help to inform the investigation and policies that the Commission will recommend.

Results:

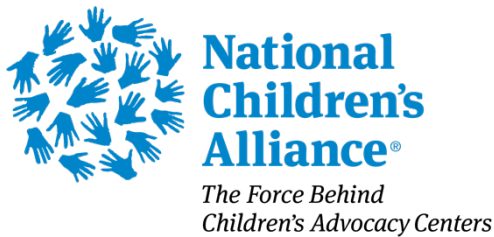
In the Commission's report, it will include information from the investigation and recommendations based on that information on, but not limited to, the following categories:

1. **Methods of Prevention:** The report will discuss how are institutions and individuals able to continually allow these acts to be committed so frequently and what policies and procedures can be put into place that will stop this.
2. **Access to Justice:** The report will discuss what barriers victims and survivors have encountered in the past and what reforms need to take place to remove those barriers to allow them to seek justice from their abusers. This will include a focus on the civil family court system where children are simply not believed when they come forward about abuse they have experienced. In fact, the system continues to punish those children and protectors who report the abuse. Reforms suggested will focus on how to properly train those within this system to believe those who have been subjected to abuse and how to distinguish them in this broken system.

3. Reduction to Cost on Society: The report will discuss the overall cost of child sex abuse on society as a whole and how the reforms the Commission recommends will both eliminate and alleviate the cost to victims, survivors, and society as a whole.



Marci A. Hamilton
Chief Executive Officer and Academic Director
CHILD USA
mhamilton@childusa.org
(215) 353-8984



The Leading Expert on Sex Abuse in Schools:
Charol Shakeshaft, Ph.D.
Professor
School of Education
Virginia Commonwealth University



enough secrets.
enough shame.
enough hurt.
enough confusion.
enough denial.

enough child sexual abuse.

ENOUGH ABUSE CAMPAIGN

The Leadership Council on Child Abuse & Interpersonal Violence

Supporting Justice ♦ Protecting Children ♦ Promoting Responsible Science

