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## **Catholics for Catholics Stands in the Breach Defending the Sacrament of Confession vs Arizona Democrat Lawmakers**

**PHOENIX, ARIZONA** – Arizona **House Bill 2039**, ‘clergy; priests; duty to report,’ should alarm every Catholic, regardless of whether it ultimately becomes law. While the bill may not pass, the fact that it was introduced at all reveals a disturbing willingness to interfere with one of the most sacred practices of the Catholic faith.

**HB 2039**, sponsored by Representative Stacey Travers, would place Catholic priests in an impossible position by attempting to compel them to violate the Seal of Confession under threat of severe criminal penalties. This is not a minor policy disagreement. It is a direct challenge to a sacrament that Catholics have held sacred for over two thousand years. Under **HB 2039**, clergy would be required to report to law enforcement or child protection authorities if they have “knowledge or a reasonable suspicion” that a person is committing, has committed, or may commit child abuse or neglect. While the bill includes a narrow acknowledgment of penitential communications, it explicitly strips that protection away if a priest determines that the alleged abuse is “still occurring or will occur in the future.” In other words, the bill places priests in the position of judging the content of a confession, predicting future conduct, and then deciding whether to disclose what was revealed in a sacramental confession to the state.

The Sacrament of Confession is not a casual conversation, nor is it a counseling session subject to state regulation. It is a sacred encounter between a penitent soul and God. The Seal of Confession is absolute. A priest may not disclose what is heard in confession for any reason, under any circumstance. This has been the consistent teaching and practice of the Catholic Church since its earliest days.

Catholics for Catholics is calling out Representative Travers for even entertaining legislation of this nature. This bill did not appear in a vacuum. It comes from the same political movement that consistently supports unlimited abortion, rejects the humanity of the unborn, and promotes radical gender ideology that encourages the medical mutilation of children.

When a political worldview shows open hostility to moral limits, natural law, and religious truth, it should not surprise anyone when it also turns its attention toward dismantling sacred religious protections.



Catholics are not indifferent to the protection of children. On the contrary, the Church has an obligation to protect the vulnerable and to encourage repentance and justice. But coercing priests to violate the Seal of Confession does not make children safer. It destroys trust in a sacrament that has historically led sinners to repentance, conversion, and, in many cases, self-reporting and restitution.

History shows that priests have gone to jail and even to their deaths rather than break the Seal of Confession. This is not hypothetical. It is part of the lived reality of the Catholic faith. Any law that assumes priests will simply comply misunderstands the seriousness of what is being asked. Catholics for Catholics proudly stands in the breach defending the rights of Catholics in the public square. We will stand behind our priests and the faithful laity in their right to this sacrament. We will not accept legislation that treats a sacred religious obligation as a criminal act.

Even if **HB 2039** fails, it should never have been proposed. Laws that threaten the free exercise of religion do real damage long before a final vote is taken. This bill deserves to be publicly rejected, clearly condemned, and firmly opposed.

The Seal of Confession is sacred and non-negotiable as is our sacred duty to defend children, obeying the words of Christ, *“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them; for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”* Mt 19:14.