

July 29, 2020

***For Immediate Release***

*Diocese Blaming the Victim in Lawsuit*

**Butte, Montana:** Vicevich Law represents John and Heather Stenson in a recently filed lawsuit against Butte Central schools and the Catholic Diocese entities who control the schools that involved conduct that has already been criminally charged as felonies. In response to the lawsuit filing, the Diocese issued a press release that attacked the Stensons for filing this suit, and it was pointedly aimed at blaming the Stensons for certain conduct that was, in fact, prompted by the Diocese and its entities. For that reason, Vicevich Law finds it necessary to issue this Press Release.

The allegations of misconduct known to date are presented in the Complaint, which can be accessed [here](#).

“I found it particularly repugnant that the Diocese chose to respond by placing John and Heather in the forefront and not emphasizing the tragic consequences of these events,” says attorney Lawrence Henke from Vicevich Law.

The Diocese press release named John and Heather Stenson when it did not need to, and it sends the message to victims that if they speak out, they will be named, and it will be publicized to the media. It also seeks to shame and take credibility away from the victims, stating “no direct or verifiable reports or allegations of abuse by Brad Kadrmas have been made.” The press release also insinuates that this new complaint has no merit because of the prior complaint against Amy Kadrmas, but fails to address the known, and admitted, drug and alcohol use on school premises.

The Diocese is taking a particularly distasteful approach to responding to these allegations of misconduct. Overtly “blaming the victim” is a historical response tactic, attacking those who make the allegations. The Diocese intended to have a chilling effect on future reports. By contrast, for example:

The Santa Rosa Diocese issued a press release in June 2020 stating it was informed by letter of an accusation against Reverend Jerome Stack. Not once in the entire press release was the victim named nor parents identified – this diocese expressed regret and a commitment to healing.

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond issued a press release on February 17, 2020 announcing its reconciliation program. Not once in the press release were victims identified nor their parents publicly disclosed.

The Diocese of Lansing Michigan issued a press release on September 27, 2019 about accusations of sexual abuse of minors by priests. Not once in the press release were the victims identified nor their parents publicly disclosed.

The public need look no further than the self-serving press release presented by the Diocese that it is overtly attacking the victims, and it is a blatantly transparent effort to put blame on the Stensons for making these allegations. In the course of investigating the actions of Butte Central surrounding one minor child, this firm learned of additional acts of negligence by the school and its administration.

The allegations of teacher Brad Kadrmas' misconduct, whom the Diocese wrongly contends has never, before July 2020, been accused of criminal activity, were initially presented to the Dioceses in February 2020 and the Diocese responded by attacking the victim. In response to the February 2020 notice, the Diocese presented 14 defensive questions to the Stensons — each pointed at placing blame on the minor child — and included asking for his counselor's names, his 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade school records, and his interactions with his older brother. The Diocese went on to later threaten a counter-suit for malicious prosecution and abuse of process if the entirety of the allegations which there were provided in February 2020 and July 2020 were made public in a lawsuit.

The Diocese did not ask a single question about the emotional well-being of the minor child; not a single question was posed about helping the minor child navigate the psychological recovery from the now “direct” criminal felonies occurring on school property and from which he was the victim; and, no human decency was provided the Stensons for the impact to their family by the Diocese through counseling or assistance.

The additional allegations against Brad Kadrmas were presented to the Diocese in July 2020 and the Diocese was offered the opportunity to discuss the situation and work jointly with the Stensons toward a resolution. Instead, the Diocese responded combatively and refused to agree to a rational discussion of the matter. The last response from the Dioceses counsel through email on July 24, 2020, was “Go home, have a beer, relax and think and as an old altar boy see if you can remember the suscipiat — like I can for some reason — and reconsider your need to act with haste.” Brad Luck, Counsel for the Diocese and Butte Central School entities.

The Stensons then, and only after being rebuffed by the Dioceses, proceeded to the lawsuit filing. And in response, the Dioceses “outed” the Stensons and accused them of non-cooperation as part of an anticipated “chilling” tactic that has been used in the past.

This matter will proceed in the Courts as a civil action and this firm will advocate zealously for its clients, even in the face of overt attacks by the Diocese.

If anyone has information related to Brad Kadrmas, Amy Kadrmas, or the actions of Butte Central Schools in the treatment of minor children, please contact Vicevich Law at [www.vicevichlaw.com](http://www.vicevichlaw.com), (406) 782-1111, or call law enforcement.