



McGrath Training Systems Supports Adoption of California Law Extending Sexual Misconduct Statute of Limitations

Mary Jo McGrath, investigative attorney and expert witness in cases of educator sexual misconduct, believes the California legislature must extend statute of limitation for educator sexual abuse to the alleged victim's 26th birthday. Current law allows school districts to benefit from their own negligence.

Santa Barbara, CA, April 09, 2008 --(PR.com)-- California legislators should have the courage to hold school districts and other public agencies accountable for the actions of their employees and pass SB 1339, says Mary Jo McGrath, a nationally recognized expert on the subject of sexual misconduct in schools, and the former chair of the U.S. Department of Education's Expert Panel on Safe and Drug-Free Schools. McGrath, CEO of [McGrath Training Systems](#), Santa Barbara, Calif., is the author of extensive training programs for school districts to raise awareness of sexual misconduct in schools, and to teach them proper complaint intake and investigation techniques.

The bill under consideration extends the statute of limitations on the California Tort Claims Act relative to sexual abuse of students until the victim's 26th birthday. Currently, the act requires a lawsuit to be filed within six months of the precipitating event. The amendment, proposed by Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, and passed by the judiciary committee, extends to public school students the same access to legal redress currently given to students in private schools, and importantly, gives school districts a reason to vigilantly protect students from such abuse, McGrath says.

"It is a fact that children who are victims of sexual abuse may not acknowledge what has happened to them for many years," she says. "Six months is far too short a time for a victim of such a trauma to seek legal redress. As a California attorney and an expert witness in educator sexual misconduct cases nationally, I fully support extending the statute of limitation on this crime. Victims, who often are young children, must have adequate time to understand what has happened to them and to exercise their legal rights."

School districts should not be shielded from this type of claim, as it goes to the heart of their duty to protect kids, McGrath asserts.

"These suits are meant to redress great injury, and there is no greater injury to the dignity and spirit of a child than to suffer sexual abuse at the hands of a trusted adult," she states. "School districts, as governmental agencies, need to be accountable to know how to prevent educator sexual misconduct and how to investigate rumors and allegations in order to adequately protect children.

"They must stop the practice of extracting quiet, voluntary resignations from these predators and allowing them to move along to another unsuspecting district. The current statute of limitations protects public school districts at the expense of its students and society as a whole."

Further, McGrath believes this bill supports the 2007 California Supreme Court decision that knocked



down the “Iron-Clad Wall” preventing the admission of evidence over four years old in teacher discipline cases. SB 1339 is in synch with holding districts accountable for their actions, and those of their employees, she says, adding, "A district should not be able to benefit from its own negligence."

McGrath Training Systems offers comprehensive risk-control training for school districts on subjects such as bullying prevention, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and athletic liability, including complaint intake, investigation and intervention, and preventing wrongful discharge. McGrath Training Systems also offers a groundbreaking constructive communication and leadership training curriculum.

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