

Questions for the Record from Senator Charles E. Grassley

Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Protecting Our Children – The Importance of Training Child Protection Professionals

May 23, 2012

For Michael Johnson:

1. I'm interested in your thoughts about teacher reporting laws. In your opinion, how effective are teacher reporting laws?

Not very. One of many problems is the variance in definition, mandated reporters, requires training etc. from state to state. By far the biggest complaint of teachers is the length of time it takes to actually report when calling the hotline. Teachers complain about lack of knowledge or follow-up, or what happened with the report, was there an investigation etc. the assumption is state CPS is either investigating or providing services, which may be true, however, the teacher sees the same student, exhibiting or complaining of the same behavior or circumstance.. This creates a dynamic of mistrust between agencies. Higher functioning CAC's and MDT's (should) have addressed this by inclusion in MDT staffing when appropriate.

(See Shakeshaft research for incidence attached).

What additional training may be necessary to provide to teachers to ensure that they report suspected child abuse to the proper authorities?

Honorable Senator Grassley:

All persons should be mandated reporters of Child Abuse. NO exceptions including the common special or privileged relationship

Clergy Penitent

Attorney Client

Doctor Patient

Or other variations state or federal legislators can think of.

Please broaden this discussion to include all youth-serving organizations, children's interests are not served by siloeing or concentrating efforts in one area (e.g., schools) and not others, e.g., youth-serving organizations, youth ministries; camping, mentoring, STEM, or leadership programs, etc. Thus my response is for them all and will thus apply to schools. There is a huge disconnect between what 'real' experts know about abuse, abuse dynamics and offender behavior and lay professionals such as teachers. In real life, child molesters are scary to the lay person and lay professional. These offenders are parents, idealized in the community, charismatic, a "groomer," the reporter has normal reticence to report due to fear of administration, media, impact on the person work or organization, simple ignorance of the observed symptoms or risk, lack of knowledge of

offender behavior, fear of impact on the reporter or fear of involvement of the criminal/civil justice system.

A classic small town refrain, “when you report someone in the am, everyone in town will know in the pm.”

Teachers like doctors (pediatricians) fear a reputation for reporting abuse will adversely impact their career.

Much of the current training is advocate-/survivor-based and primarily in the area of sexual abuse. While many do a good job, real experts know there are numerous challenges facing youth today, and these challenges are here and continuously emerging. The training should be broader yet more detailed, and layered over years as more techniques by offenders are identified, specifically:

- Offender behavior
 - Prevalence and incidence
- Grooming, of child, parents, community organizations
- Compliancy of victims
- Situational predation (not Kenneth Lanning, but Dr. David Finkelhor)
- All forms of physical abuse and neglect with visuals
- ACE research and impact on youth
- Youth-on-youth problematic, sexual, and criminal behaviors
- Outcry and disclosure processes
- How to receive a disclosure
- Reporting procedures

Dr Charol Shakeshaft is a colleague. I am impressed with her work in the area of schools (see attached). I do not know how she is received by school districts and administrations. We met while in the planning stages for Boy Scouts of America National Youth Protection Symposium 2012 in Atlanta Ga., (see attached) the first and still only of its kind geared directly to YSOs, for the purpose of bringing REAL experts into these topical discussion areas with youth serving organizations..

Sir, in my personal opinion, the Sandusky's of the world will always prey not only on our youth, but our communities, until and unless specialists who know predation are brought in to intervene. Providing lay professionals, teachers, and other YSO with more recognition tools on perpetrator behavior – from the perp's perspective not victim's – is a must. However they are no match for the high functioning criminal sexual deviant.

Reporting Laws

Original mandatory reporter laws carried a criminal and penal sanction. Some still do. Ever wonder why the original mandated reporter of child abuse: law enforcement, school personnel, and hospital professionals – the very experts in recognition- needed a criminal or civil sanction for not reporting? My point is there is more at stake here than a simple, Report Abuse.

An examination of the real issues surrounding (lack of)reporting presented by someone who KNOWS the issue of abuse, will bridge the schism.

2. **It appears that there's a great deal of cooperation at the local level, including multi-disciplinary teams and Child Advocacy Centers. At the federal level, both the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services are vital to helping train professionals in the field. Is there anything done at the federal level that impedes cooperation at the local level? Do you have suggestions on what the federal government can do better to encourage more state and local cooperation?**

Sir, I founded one of the highest functioning CAC's in the nation and set in place the policies, procedure, culture of multidisciplinarity and collaboration as well as have traveled and trained at over 250 MDT/CAC communities including Indian Country. With budget cuts at all levels I fear an oversimplification or embellishment of success. CAC's and MDT's make a huge difference in coordination and response however, they are not evolving to meet needs nor are they progressing in the field as they should. Most CAC's are struggling to pay top heavy staff and compromising the service to abused kids and families. As Victor Vieth and I presented, there is STILL a fundamental failure on ALL levels to adequately train the child abuse interveners or child protection workers in the many areas they will be investigating. When I was presenting at national conferences (before employment at BSA), I often asked LE officers to raise their hands if they were adequately trained to investigate the very cases they would be assigned prior to assignment to an MDT/CAC 99 out of 100 would raise their hand. In today's time this is failure. The reality is that if their agency has funding to send them to training, they will get bits and pieces of information over the years. Few having access to the training needed. Keep in mind many work three-five years in CA investigation before rotating out, by burning out, retirement, reassignment or promotion. The next LEO comes in to start the process over.

It takes three weeks of eight-hour training days to adequately train an investigator in all areas he/she may have to investigate the typical forms of child maltreatment an investigator may face.

While we have awesome national conferences, they do not train one in the skills needed to investigate child abuse.

We presented the answer...