

Public's right to know triumphs again in court

THE HOUR, Norwalk, CT, editorial, 12/11/06

Score another one for the public's right to know. A Superior Court judge ruled last week that the public has the right to view sealed court documents from nearly two dozen sex abuse suits against the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport. The cases were settled in 2001 and Judge Jon Alander said the original reason for secrecy — to ensure a fair trial — is no longer relevant.

The judge's words sum it up: "The public's right to access to those documents is particularly strong in these cases due to the extraordinary public interest in knowing whether minors in Connecticut were sexually abused by priests employed by the diocese and whether the diocese was responsible for perpetuating that abuse." The case was brought before the court by four major newspapers.

As bad as ignoring the abuse was, as always, it's the cover-up that exacerbates the case and ultimately trips up those responsible.

--