

## Recommendations to The Horace Mann Board of Trustees

I'm Adam Kasanof, Class of '77. I retired from the NYPD as a lieutenant after 21 years, and I'm a lawyer. I'd like to offer the Board of Trustees the kind of recommendations you would pay a high priced lawyer and a high priced public relations firm a lot of money to get. I know because I asked a high priced lawyer and a high priced corporate communications expert for help when I wrote them. I'm sure you've already seen some similar recommendations in letters and petitions you've received, but some recommendations below you have probably \*not\* seen.

You need to do five main things.

You need to set up a system that gives counseling and psychological treatment, as well as cash compensation, to former students who were sexually abused. Let me say clearly that people who have been sexually abused usually are \*not\* looking for money, or publicity. It may take them years to come forward (if they ever do). Viewing them as money-hungry potential litigants is wrong.

You need to set up a system to prevent future sexual abuse at the school. That system should have outside investigators to investigate allegations of abuse. It should have a completely anonymous reporting system so that students can report abuse anonymously, directly to outside investigators, without the need to speak to any teacher, administrator, or other school employee. There should still be a system allowing students or faculty to report abuse through the school if they wish, but there must be a second, anonymous reporting system in place. Bear in mind that many who report abuse may not be the abuse victim, but may be fellow students, or faculty members who may not initially want to speak for the record. And any report of abuse, however received, should trigger investigation by outside investigators.

You need to apologize, sincerely, on behalf of the school, and it can't just be a lawyer-written, non-apologizing apology.

You need to have an outside investigation done into the allegations that have been made, and you need to publish the results, with due consideration given to the wishes and privacy of the people who were abused.

You need to remove the names of known abusers, and those who facilitated abuse, from school facilities, memorial plaques, honor rolls, and endowed academic chairs. This is a symbolic act, but an important one.

I don't know what your lawyers have told you, but let me say: anyone who tells you that they can protect the school from all possible criminal or civil action is incorrect. Bear in mind that even if many, or most, older abuse cases are barred by the statute of limitations, there may be a few that aren't. For example, there are some states where there is a long statute of limitations, or \*no\* statute of limitations for criminal or civil actions in sexual abuse cases. It is highly likely that faculty and students traveled to at least one of these states during field trips. Instead of stonewalling until disastrous

litigation has to occur, you need to work out a fair compensation system. It will cost less than litigation. (\*Much\* less.)

You need to act quickly, for three reasons. First, it is the right thing to do. Second, it is important for the school's fundraising and reputation. Third, Horace Mann has stated publicly that sexual abuse can't possibly occur the way that it used to. Suppose a current or recent student who has been abused comes forward. (And much as we all wish that won't ever happen, it \*will\* happen, though no one can say when.) If Horace Mann has not already publicly committed to taking action, and started taking it, the next report of abuse will not seem like an isolated event, but like business as usual. That would be highly damaging. An offer of reasonable compensation would give you notice of possible claims against the school, and the chance to resolve them equitably, without the cost of litigation. It would also help in addressing any current problems that may exist.

The five things above are not the only things you should do, but they are important to do right now. You need to commit publicly to doing them, and doing them promptly.

Please take these recommendations seriously. Do not make the all-too-common mistake of thinking that this will go away if you just wait it out.