

Abuse victims oppose pick for new House chaplain

by [Kevin Eckstrom](#) in the [June 14, 2011](#) issue

The nation's leading advocacy group for victims of clergy sexual abuse is opposing an Oregon Jesuit's bid to serve as House chaplain, saying he failed to follow up on alleged abuse 25 years ago.

The

Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) said Patrick Conroy should have contacted the police and followed up with his archbishop when nothing happened to the accused priest.

Conroy was nominated

by House Speaker John Boehner with the support of minority leader Nancy Pelosi to be the second consecutive Catholic, and first Jesuit, to serve as House chaplain.

In 2002, Conroy told the *Seattle Times*

that he informed the archbishop of Seattle in 1986 that another priest, Dennis Champagne, had molested a young boy. Champagne remained a priest until 2002. The archdiocese said the alleged victim did not want to proceed with the case in 1986, and Champagne was sent to therapy and remained a priest until the victim came forward again in 2002.

SNAP

board member Peter Isely said Conroy could have done more. "We send a hurtful message to crime victims and their loved ones . . . if we knowingly promote someone who didn't call the police when he suspected possible child abuse," Isely said.

Patrick Lee, a spokesman for the Oregon Jesuits, told *Roll Call*

that he was "deeply disappointed" in the criticisms. "Father Conroy is an excellent priest worthy of the nomination made by Speaker Boehner," he said. "He has never been the subject of an allegation of child

abuse." —RNS