

By The Associated Press

July 13, 2012

Reaction to Freeh Group's findings on Penn State

Reactions to Freeh Report released Thursday that found Joe Paterno and other top Penn State officials hushed up child sex abuse allegation against Jerry Sandusky more than a decade ago for fear of bad publicity:

"The idea that any sane, responsible adult would knowingly cover up for a child predator is impossible to accept. The far more realistic conclusion is that many people didn't fully understand what was happening and underestimated or misinterpreted events. Sandusky was a great deceiver. He fooled everyone — law enforcement, his family, coaches, players, neighbors, university officials, and everyone at Second Mile." — Paterno family statement.

"To my understanding ... when all is said and done, Joe never said (to former Athletic Director Tim) Curley, 'Don't investigate.' There was no intent to conceal (anything) by Joe ... It was reported to people he was supposed to." — Scott Paterno, the late coach's son.

"Very often the people closest to someone like this are the ones that miss it. We aren't the only ones who missed it. ... Every one of us wishes that we would have seen something or caught something that would have done something about it." — Jay Paterno, the late coach's son, speaking to ESPN.

"There are monsters among us, people who will hurt children for their own sexual gratification. Every university, school, business and individual has an obligation to follow up and report such cases." — Gov. Tom Corbett, who was attorney general when the investigation into Sandusky was begun by state prosecutors.

"(Paterno's) 61 years of excellent service to the university is now marred." — Karen Peetz, chairwoman of the university's board of trustees.

"Unfortunately, Judge Freeh's conclusion, repeated often during his press conference this morning, that Dr. Spanier was engaged in a course of 'active concealment,' is simply not supported by the facts or by the report itself." — Timothy Lewis and Peter Vaira, lawyers for ousted university president Graham Spanier.

"It really confirms everybody's worst fears about what was going on there. The fact that this is such a complete indictment of the university leadership is opening people's eyes to the potential liability that schools face if they don't address this correctly. ... Heads of every college and university in the country have got to be taking note of this, and calling board meetings today and saying, 'We need to make sure that we change the way we're doing things.'" — Scott Berkowitz, president of the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network.

"I think that we should be careful that we don't paint the entire football program over a long period of time with a single brush. ... These things happen in schools, in churches, in youth camps ... all over." — Penn State President Rodney Erickson, who called the scandal the "most painful chapter" in school history.

"He built this town. All of his victories, he'll be remembered by everyone in town for a long time, but there will be that hesitation." — Christian Beveridge, a masonry worker who grew up near Penn State on Paterno's legacy.

"The report notes that before the 1998 incident involving Victim 6, university employees, including coaches, observed Sandusky showering with a young boy in Penn State facilities on multiple occasions. Apparently, with regard to Sandusky, the University and its employees embraced a philosophy of hear no evil, see no evil, and speak no evil," said Howard Janet, a lawyer for Victim 6.

"The Freeh Group was limited in its investigation by lack of subpoena power and the reluctance of many people to be interviewed. ... The result is a lopsided document that leaves the majority of the story untold," said defense lawyer Caroline Roberto, who represents Curley.

"When the complete factual story is told before an impartial jury, it will be clear that Mike McQueary never told Mr. Schultz that he witnessed Mr. Sandusky engaging in anal intercourse with a young boy, that Mr. Schultz did not possess or maintain any secret files about Mr. Sandusky, and that there were no efforts between and among Messrs. Schultz, Curley, Paterno and Spanier to conceal Mr. Sandusky's behavior," said defense lawyer Tom Farrell, who represents former university vice president Gary Schultz.

"I am carefully reading the report and recommendations with respect to the football department, including any gaps that may exist, to identify what changes can and should be made," said head football coach Bill O'Brien. "We can and we must do better. Nonetheless, I too remain proud of the accomplishments and character of Penn State's many generations of student-athletes, and I look forward to doing my part to ensure we emerge stronger than before."

"The knowledge of Paterno in 1998 — the fact that Sandusky was known to be a grave risk to children for 14 years and nothing was done to stop him — that is a crying shame. And it's something that will be a stain on Penn State for a long time to come." — Tom Kline, lawyer for a boy known as Victim 5 who was assaulted by Sandusky in a football team shower in 2001.

"This is a serious indictment against Penn State's culture and environment of protecting at all costs the football program, and Sandusky was a major part of the success of Penn State's football program for many years. Nothing is shocking anymore in this case ... but the fact that the highest levels of the school made a conscious decision to cover up what Sandusky had done, it comes close. It is shocking." — Michael Boni, a lawyer for a boy known as Victim 1 who came forward in 2008, starting the Sandusky investigation.

"Despite being children within easy reach of many supposedly great local figures, (the victims) were offered no outstretched hand. They were left to save themselves. This campus is plagued by desperate, insistent shrieks of 'We are Penn State.' It's time for Penn State to realize that adhering to this mantra is distancing and self-defeating. It is time to follow a path of humility, not one of hubris." — Matt Bodenschatz, a Penn State student and spokesman for Voices for Victims.

"The actions of five or six people don't reflect on the hundreds of thousands" of students and faculty who make up Penn State. — Mary Krupa, a Penn State freshman who grew up in State College.

"The Freeh report is absolutely devastating to Penn State. It confirms that at the highest level, Penn State officials, including the university president and head football coach, knew that Sandusky was a child predator, but made the deliberate and reprehensible decision to conceal his abuse. They chose to protect themselves, Penn State's brand and image, and their football program instead of children." — Andrew Shubin and Justine Andronici, lawyers for Matt Sandusky and Victims 3, 7, 10, among others.

"We'll continue working with all relevant campus officials and law enforcement personnel to determine whether or not there was a violation of the Clery Act. Beyond that, our investigation is ongoing." — Justin Hamilton, spokesman for the U.S. Department of Education.

"Throughout this entire time, the focus of the attorney general's office has been on the criminal process — seeking justice for the victims of Jerry Sandusky's predatory sexual abuse and identifying other individuals who may also have violated state laws. ... Today's release of the Freeh Report will not hinder the continuing work of our statewide investigating grand jury, nor will it impact ongoing criminal prosecutions." — Pennsylvania Attorney General Linda Kelly.

"There are no details about Sandusky's conduct before 1998, the involvement of Second Mile, its interplay with Penn State and Penn State officials. If that was the decision of the board, and the direction given to Freeh and his team, shame on them for not wanting to know the full picture" — Jeff Anderson, a lawyer who filed the first civil suit against the university, Sandusky and Sandusky's charity, the Second Mile, on behalf of a man who claims Sandusky sexually abused him from 1992 to 1996.

"To have a rotating group of 32 people, over more than a decade, act like that's OK, I think that's an enormous problem. To not have one person say it's not OK for us to rubber stamp what he was telling us? There was an ultimate gatekeeper that didn't really report to anybody, and had no oversight." — Maribeth Roman Schmidt, spokeswoman for Penn Staters for Responsible Stewardship, an alumni group calling for the entire board of trustees to resign.

"Other than my parents, my college coach, Bill Bowerman, was the biggest influence in my life. Bill Bowerman and Joe Paterno shared some great qualities. Throughout Joe Paterno's career, he strived to put young athletes in a position to succeed and win in sport but most importantly in life. Joe influenced thousands of young men to become better leaders, fathers and husbands. According to the investigation, it appears Joe made missteps that led to heartbreaking consequences. I missed that Joe missed it, and I am extremely saddened on this day. My love for Joe and his family remains." — Phil Knight, co-founder and chairman of the board at Nike Inc.

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