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by The Associated Press

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A Roman Catholic bishop in Rhode Island responded to the controversy created by a priest who said he'd deny communion to state legislators who support abortion and then defended his stance by saying abortion is worse than pedophilia.

The Rev. Richard Bucci, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in West Warwick, Rhode Island, distributed fliers in January that said that every lawmaker who voted last year to preserve the right to an abortion in state law would be denied communion, [The Providence Journal](#) reported. He also mailed them to lawmakers' homes.

Bucci, when questioned by [WJAR-TV](#), said, "pedophilia doesn't kill anyone and this does."

Diocese of Providence Bishop Thomas Tobin wrote Wednesday on Twitter that "no one has an absolute right to receive Holy Communion." He said in a statement Thursday "it is important to affirm that both the sexual abuse of minors and abortion are horrific, immoral actions that have very serious, harmful consequences."

A group of state lawmakers and clergy sex abuse victims [called on Tobin](#) to suspend Bucci, who said he isn't planning to resign.

Tobin's statement does not mention any disciplinary action. His office said there will be no further comment at this time.

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