

U.S. Mormon Church Sued for Sexual Abuse of Navajo Children



Salt Lake City, June 16 (RHC)-- In the United States, the now-defunct foster program of the Mormon Church already has four Navajo victims involved in lawsuits, with more that have come forward.

A fourth person is suing the Mormon Church for enduring sexual abuse by his foster father while he was a part of a church program that placed Navajo children with Mormon families.

ABC News reports that the man, identified as L.K. in the lawsuit, said that when he reported the abuse that occurred in the 1970s in northern Utah to workers in the Mormon program, they took no heed to his concerns.

L.K.'s attorney, Craig Vernon, said L.K.'s abuser has died. Vernon is representing another Navajo woman who has also sued, and said that more lawsuits could be coming, as more possible victims have come forward.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints spokesman Eric Hawkins said none of the alleged perpetrators were church leaders, but people associated with host families and that the alleged abuse of the four victims occurred before the church created a program to address abuse.

Thousands of Native American children participated in the program from the late 1940s until 2000, when it ended. The attorney said he's looking for monetary compensation for his two clients, for the Mormon church to change its policies so suspected abuse is always reported, and a formal apology from the religion to Navajos for the program.

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