



Advertisement

# Feds investigating Stonehill College for handling of sexual assaults

By Cody Shepard, The Enterprise



Updated: 6:32 PM EDT Mar 15, 2016

**EASTON, Mass.** — The federal Office for Civil Rights has opened an investigation into the

The Department of Education office recently sent a letter confirming the investigation to Boston attorney Wendy Murphy, who filed a Title IX complaint last summer seeking an investigation.

Advertisement

Murphy is representing a Stonehill student who says she was raped by a student-athlete on Feb. 15, 2015, in a bathroom at a private Easton residence.

In the complaint, Murphy said the student's rights to an equal education were violated under Title IX. She says the investigator at Stonehill considered her client not to be credible, did not reveal witnesses biases as they were friends of the assailant and failed to provide a written description of the rationale behind the school's decision.

In a March 3 letter, Ryan Milligan, a compliance team leader with the Office for Civil Rights, notified Murphy that her complaint led to an investigation.

"OCR has determined that it will also investigate whether the College failed to respond promptly and equitably to reports and/or incidents of sexual violence of which it had notice and, as a result, students were subjected to a sexually hostile environment," Milligan wrote.

Although Murphy is representing one student, she said the complaint was filed on behalf of all female students at the college.

“This is different than the run-of-the mill case because they are opening an investigation on behalf of all women as a class,” Murphy told [The Enterprise](#) in a phone interview Tuesday. “I would infer from that decision by the federal government that they’re concerned about a pattern of problems at Stonehill.”

Martin McGovern, a spokesman for Stonehill, said the college works closely with its advisor, D. Stafford and Associates, on Title IX requirements and campus safety.

“We have worked diligently to ensure that our procedures and protocols comply with our legal obligations and with best practices,” McGovern wrote in an email, adding that the college is cooperating with the investigation. “We welcome the opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to the Title IX process.”

Murphy said she’s seen countless letters in her time of representing victims, but that this one was different.

“It’s a bit unusual because Stonehill knows that I filed on behalf of an individual. And the OCR knows,” she said. “Yet, the investigation is clearly going to be much more broad-sweeping than that. That is good news for all women at Stonehill.”

The civil rights office is responsible for enforcing Title IX, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in programs and activities receiving financial assistance.

Murphy, a former prosecutor and nationally recognized expert on sex crimes whose syndicated column runs in [The Enterprise](#), said parents expect their children to feel safe when they send them to college.

In 10 years – from 2007 to 2016 – there have been at least 29 sexual assaults reported on the Stonehill campus, according to federal data and Stonehill. None of the cases have resulted in criminal charges.

Murphy said all her clients feel betrayed by their universities and hope the investigations find

“I hope and expect that the OCR will examine whether the failure to report or prosecute these assaults as crimes is helping to keep incident rates higher,” she said.



## Good Housekeeping

[62 Cheap Christmas Gifts That Look More Expensive Than They Are](#)  
[10 Best Picks from Lululemon's 'We Made Too Much Section' This Month](#)

[63 Unique Stocking Stuffers for Men That He's Guaranteed to Love](#)  
[25 Best Christmas Decorations on Amazon for 2022](#)

Last viewed by the First Circuit Library on 12/16/2022

---

Advertisement

# WCVB BOSTON



[Contact Us](#)

[News Team](#)

[Apps & Social](#)

[Email Alerts](#)

[Careers](#)

[Internships](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Digital Advertising Terms & Conditions](#)

[Broadcast Terms & Conditions](#)

[RSS](#)

[EEO Reports](#)

[Captioning Contacts](#)

[Public Inspection File](#)

[Public File Assistance](#)

[FCC Applications](#)

[News About WCVB](#)

[News Policy Statements](#)

Hearst Television participates in various affiliate marketing programs, which means we may get paid commissions on editorially chosen products purchased through our links to retailer sites.

©2022, Hearst Television Inc. on behalf of WCVB-TV.

[Privacy Notice](#) [Your California Privacy Rights](#) [Interest-Based Ads](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Site Map](#)

Last viewed by the First Circuit Library on 12/16/2022