

Moms for Liberty outreach leader exposed as registered sex offender

 theguardian.com/us-news/2023/nov/21/moms-for-liberty-sex-offender

<https://www.theguardian.com/profile/edwardhelmore>

November 21, 2023



Moms for Liberty is a conservative parental rights group that is pushing to exclude discussion of gender and diversity from school curricula. Photograph: Matt Rourke/AP

This article is more than **1 year old**

This article is more than 1 year old

Phillip Fisher Jr, who served three years in prison, volunteered at Philadelphia summit for rightwing parental rights group

A Philadelphia-based outreach leader for [Moms for Liberty](#) – the conservative parental rights group that is pushing to exclude discussion of gender and diversity from school curricula – has been exposed as a registered sex offender.

[According to the Philadelphia Inquirer](#), Phillip Fisher Jr – a pastor and local Republican ward leader who volunteered at Moms for Liberty’s national summit in Philadelphia this year – pleaded guilty in 2012 to a charge of aggravated sexual abuse involving a 14-year-old boy when he was 25 and living in Chicago.

Sheila Armstrong, the chairwoman of Philadelphia's Moms for Liberty chapter, confirmed to the Inquirer that Fisher was still planning to volunteer at her autism non-profit's Christmas party.

Armstrong said she was surprised to learn of Fisher's criminal record because she had received a "child abuse history certification" from Pennsylvania's department of human services in his name that did not turn up any record of him "as a perpetrator of an indicated or founded report of child abuse".

However, Fisher is [registered as a sex offender](#) on an Illinois state police list and on the US justice department's [national sex offender](#) website. He told the Inquirer that he never intentionally hid anything about his past.

"I'm in the database," he added. "It's an easy search."

Moms for Liberty [responded by posting Fisher's certification on X](#), adding that news outlets that had picked up the story "don't want to hold [state] leaders accountable".

"This person is not a chapter chair – he was a volunteer with the Philadelphia chapter," the group added. "Our chapter chair did a background check with Pennsylvania [homeland security] and he was cleared pursuant to child protective services law."

The Moms for Liberty co-founder Tina Descovich [also said](#) that Armstrong runs all her chapter volunteers through the state's department of human services "to make sure they are clear".

Fisher, she remarked, "is certified by the state as ALL CLEAR. It's remarkable how much time is spent trying to destroy us. The story should be about the [state] system certifying this guy."

According to court records, Fisher pleaded guilty to one of 12 charges filed against him after an investigation by the Chicago police. The charging documents allege Fisher had oral and anal sex with the victim in the case in January 2011.

Fisher served three years in prison followed by two years of supervised release.

He told the Inquirer that the charges against him were fabricated – a "railroad job" – and drummed up by the political action committee for Lyndon LaRouche, a US presidential candidate now widely regarded as conspiracy theorist.

"At the time, I was the victim," he told the Inquirer. "What they did was basically trumped up charges to drown out the complaints that I was making on the issues of human rights."

Fisher said LaRouche's organization was "a cult", and he was set up while trying to get out of it. "It was a political situation that happened between me and Lyndon LaRouche," he told the Inquirer. "It was a member of his camp, his party, that made the accusation. They pushed it through. It was really a railroad job."

The organization was earlier [this year listed as an "anti-government extremist" organization](#) by the Southern Poverty Law Center. It has dedicated itself to backing book bans across the US while pursuing the elimination of discussions of race, discrimination and LGBTQ+ identities in public education.

Philadelphia's Republican committee said it had demanded and received Fisher's resignation.

According to the report, the Moms for Liberty summit at which Fisher volunteered included speeches by Donald Trump as well as his fellow 2024 Republican White House nomination hopefuls Nikki Haley and Ron DeSantis.

In the US, call or text the Childhelp abuse hotline on 800-422-4453 or visit their website for more resources and to report child abuse or DM for help. For adult survivors of child abuse, help is available at ascasupport.org. In the UK, the NSPCC offers support to children on 0800 1111, and adults concerned about a child on 0808 800 5000. The National Association for People Abused in Childhood (Napac) offers support for adult survivors on 0808 801 0331. In Australia, children, young adults, parents and teachers can contact the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, or Bravehearts on 1800 272 831, and adult survivors can contact Blue Knot Foundation on 1300 657 380. Other sources of help can be found at [Child Helplines International](#)