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Two Renowned Administrators Announce State-wide New Jersey Compensation Program for Victims of Church Sexual Abuse of Minors

(Washington, D.C.--February 11, 2019) Kenneth R. Feinberg and Camille S. Biros, two noted victims' compensation experts, have been named Administrators of a New Jersey state-wide Compensation Program – approved and supported by all five Roman Catholic Dioceses located in the state. Today they announced the creation of the Independent Victim Compensation Program (“IVCP”) to pay eligible victims who were sexually abused by clergy of the Roman Catholic Church while minors.

By creating a state-wide program endorsed by all five Roman Catholic Dioceses (Newark, Trenton, Camden, Paterson, and Metuchen) Cardinal Tobin of Newark and the various Bishops throughout New Jersey have united in going further than any other state in establishing such a compensation program. In other states, such as New York and Pennsylvania, each individual Diocese has decided for itself whether to create such a program and, if so, what terms and conditions should govern. In New Jersey, however, all five Dioceses have come together and have agreed on a common Protocol.

The Program provides victims with an attractive alternative to litigation providing victims a speedy and transparent process to resolve their claims with a significantly lower level of proof and corroboration than required in a court of law.

The Administrators note that all compensation paid pursuant to the Program will come from Church funds. No public money will be used to pay eligible claims.

The two Administrators – Kenneth R. Feinberg and Camille S. Biros – have nationwide experience in designing and administering similar compensation programs for the Catholic Dioceses in New York and Pennsylvania. They also have administered such varying compensation programs as the Penn State sexual abuse claims, the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund, the BP Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill Fund, and OneFund Boston and OneFund Orlando programs arising out of terrorist attacks. The two Administrators will act independently in evaluating and compensating individual claims. Church officials will have no authority to challenge the decisions reached by the Administrators.

“Cardinal Tobin and the Bishops of the five New Jersey Dioceses have delegated to us this independent responsibility. They have assured us that we have complete discretion in deciding who is eligible to receive compensation and the amount to be paid to the individual victim,” said Co-Administrator Camille S. Biros.

Important features of the Compensation Program include:

- 1) The complete independence of the two Administrators in determining eligibility and the amount of compensation.
- 2) The Program is completely voluntary; no individual claimant is required to participate.

- 3) All payments authorized by the Administrators will come from Diocese funds; no public money will be used to compensate victims.
- 4) Only if the individual victim accepts the amount offered by the Administrators will a signed Release be required, in which the victim agrees not to engage in any further litigation against the particular Diocese.
- 5) The IVCP will first give a priority to claimants who previously complained to Church officials about the sexual abuse. Phase II of the Program will permit new claimants – who did not previously file a complaint with the Diocese – to register for consideration for eligibility to participate in the Program. Their claims will similarly be reviewed and subsequently processed by the two independent Administrators.

A Draft Protocol detailing all the terms and conditions of the IVCP will be made available on the Program website at www.NJdiocesesIVCP.com beginning March 1, 2019. A 30-day comment period will thereafter commence inviting all interested parties and the public to review the Draft Protocol and offer suggestions and recommendations for improvement. At the conclusion of the 30-day comment period, the two independent Administrators will review all such comments and make whatever adjustments they believe will improve the final product.

The IVCP will commence upon adoption of a Final Protocol and will conclude on December 31, 2019. All individual claims must be submitted during this period.

Media wishing to speak to Biros or Feinberg should contact Amy Weiss, Amy@weisspublicaffairs.com or 202-203-0448.

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