

Update from Independent Oversight Committee on Administration of the Colorado Independent Reconciliation and Reparations Program

(Denver, CO — October 16, 2020) —The three Catholic Dioceses in Colorado—the Archdiocese of Denver, and the Dioceses of Colorado Springs, and Pueblo—created and funded an independent program to help victims of historic sexual abuse, the [Independent Reconciliation and Reparations Program \(“IRRP”\)](#). The IRRP provides survivors with an opportunity to file claims for compensation and to receive victim support services, regardless of how long ago the abuse occurred.

The program is administered by nationally known administrators, Camille Biros and Kenneth R. Feinberg, independent from control by the Church. Further, the program is overseen and monitored by an independent board, the Independent Oversight Committee (“IOC”), which is chaired by former United States Senator Hank Brown. As part of its role, the IOC oversees and evaluates the IRRP’s progress.

With the support of the Colorado Attorney General, the Dioceses formally launched the IRRP in October 2019, inviting any known survivor of sexual abuse by priests from the Dioceses to file a claim. Through press releases, media coverage, a dedicated website and other public announcements, previously unknown survivors were also encouraged to file a claim.

The administrators and the IOC have received positive feedback from program participants. Many survivors (and their attorneys) have commended the option to seek compensation in a non-adversarial forum independent from the Dioceses and without regard for the statute of limitations. The IOC is pleased that after formally launching last year, the IRRP has reached so many survivors in such a short period of time.

The claims process is now closed and, as the program begins to wind down and the final claim determinations are made and accepted, the IRRP administrators have reported to the IOC the following program developments:

- 98 people filed claims with the administrators.
- 81 of the 98 claimants were determined to be eligible for compensation.
- Of the 81 eligible claimants, some were previously unknown abuse survivors, demonstrating success in reaching survivors previously unwilling or unable to come forward and receive help.
- To date, 73 survivors have been paid a total of \$6,680,000.
- The remaining 8 eligible claimants break down as follows:
 - 1 claimant recently submitted an acceptance/release and that claim is being paid;
 - 4 claimants have received but not responded to compensation offers; and
 - 3 claims are deficient (awaiting law enforcement notification by the claimants).
- To date, no claimant has rejected a compensation offer.

Consistent with the commitment they made at the beginning of the IRRP, the Dioceses have paid all claims at the amounts set by the administrators. In addition to paying every claim, all claimants—eligible or ineligible under the IRRP—have been offered victim support services through the Colorado Attorney General’s office and through the Dioceses’ continuing victim’s assistance programs. Reports of all abuse allegations in the IRRP were made to local law enforcement and the Attorney General’s Office. After a compensation offer is made, claimants have 60 days to accept or reject the offer. The IRRP administrators believe all eligible claims will be fully resolved by mid-November 2020 (with the exception of the 3 deficient claim submissions).

In February 2019, the Dioceses and the Colorado Attorney General voluntarily agreed to study the issue of sexual abuse in the Church. This resulted in a Special Master's Report on Roman Catholic Clergy Sexual Abuse of Children in Colorado ("Report"), which was released in October 2019, and was jointly funded by the Attorney General and the Dioceses. The Report identified 43 priests credibly accused of sexually abusing minors. Many of the claims being resolved through the IRRP program related to the same priests identified in the Report. A few priests not previously identified in the Report also have been accused through IRRP claims. The most recent time frame of any abuse in the Report or in the IRRP process is 1999. Consistent with the commitment to transparency made by the Dioceses in cooperation with the Attorney General and the IRRP process, the names of all credibly accused priests in the IRRP, as determined by the Special Master and the Attorney General, will be publicly disclosed at the conclusion of the IRRP.

A final report will be issued when the program concludes in the next few months.

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