

OFFICE OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY  
John J. Choi, County Attorney



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345 Wabasha Street, Suite 120, St. Paul, MN 55102-1432  
Telephone 651-266-3322 Fax 651-266-3015

## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Dennis Gerhardstein, 651 266-3074  
(Cell) 651 600-1830

### **County Attorney announces landmark civil settlement to protect children**

*Provides compliance standards with independent audits,  
increased transparency and oversight*

Saint Paul, MN – The Ramsey County Attorney’s Office (RCAO) today announced a settlement agreement of the Civil Petition filed in Ramsey County District Court on June 5, 2015 against the Archdiocese of Saint Paul & Minneapolis (Archdiocese). The criminal action remains an active case and will proceed toward resolution in Ramsey County District Court.

The primary objective of the settlement agreement (Agreement) is to transform the organizational culture of the Archdiocese into one that is vigilant about ensuring that no child will ever again become the victim of clergy sex abuse.

“Today’s historic agreement increases oversight and transparency to systemically change how the Archdiocese protects children and responds to suspected incidents of child sexual abuse,” said Ramsey County Attorney John Choi. “As a result, it is my expectation that the facts of this case will never be repeated and the protection of children will forever be of paramount importance within this Archdiocese.”

The Agreement, which runs for three years, includes oversight and enforcement mechanisms by the RCAO and the Ramsey County District Court. The Archdiocese must petition the United States Bankruptcy Court for approval of the agreement on or before January 31, 2016.

The Agreement requires an organizational structure tasked with executing its core components, including oversight by the Board of Directors, the Archbishop, Ministerial Review Board, which is comprised primarily of lay persons, as well as Director of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment. In addition, it incorporates many of the October 2014 Child Protection protocols agreed upon by the Archdiocese and Jeff Anderson & Associates as well as the 2014 recommendations of the Safe Environment Task Force.

Key elements of the Agreement include:

- Two independent audits will be completed in 2017 and 2018, with substantial involvement by the RCAO, to ensure compliance with the Agreement. (14.2)
- Judicial oversight to enforce compliance in the event there is a breach of this Agreement
- Clergy must report any arrest or citation that violates Archdiocese policies to the Director of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment, who will determine whether the matter should be forwarded to the Archbishop, Ministerial Review Board, or both (5.14.c)
- When allegations of misconduct including child sex abuse arise in the future, they will now be addressed by the Ministerial Review Board, rather than allowing one or two clergy members to determine how to respond
- When the Archdiocese receives a report of child sex abuse and makes a mandated report to law enforcement, they won't conduct their own internal investigation and won't interfere with law enforcement's investigation (6.4)
- When a cleric has been found not guilty of criminal conduct by civil authorities or has been investigated without prosecution, the Archdiocese will make an independent inquiry and evaluate the cleric's fitness for ministry (7.2)
- Board of Directors will have oversight and knowledge of the Safe Environment Program to ensure accountability at the highest levels of the Archdiocese (2.1)
- Archdiocese agrees to:
  - implement important "compliance standards" to outline a clear standard of response when suspected child sex abuse becomes known to individuals within the Archdiocese, including immediate reporting to law enforcement
  - notify local law enforcement of the location of any cleric with a substantiated claim or pending credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor (13.9)
  - confer with the RCAO to explore feasibility of implementing a fingerprinting policy as part of its background check process (5.15)
  - convene a Conference for Restorative Justice and Reconciliation to bring about further accountability and healing to victims and stakeholders (E)
  - establish an independent ombudsperson to assist victims and their families (13.8)
  - revamp its website to provide easy access to Safe Environment documents, including how to report abuse and the Archdiocese's policies on Abuse (Section 8)
  - enhance its record keeping using electronic databases to monitor compliance with Safe Environment requirements and document requirements for clergy files (throughout document)
  - consider RCAO recommendations for appointments to the Ministerial Review Board (10.1)
  - provide access to outside legal counsel to the Director of Safe Environments and the Ministerial Review Board so they don't have to rely solely on the legal counsel of the Archdiocese