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July 22, 2019

Attorney General Letitia James
Office of the NYS Attorney General
The Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Re: Call for Release of “Secret” Church Files

Dear Attorney General James:

As you know, with the passage of the Child Victim’s Act (CVA) this past legislative session, survivors of historic childhood sexual abuse from across the state have the opportunity to seek justice through the courts during a one-year window starting on August 14th. For decades, children who were involved with the Catholic Church – in services, camps, schools, or otherwise – were robbed of their innocence and left to cope with the horrific trauma of sexual abuse. Hundreds of priests were involved, thousands of victims have suffered, and countless heartbreaking stories are now coming to light.

All of this has been intentionally covered up by the Church.

As you also know, for decades the dioceses of New York have chosen to protect abusers and silence victims. The specific details of what the Church knew regarding that abuse, when it knew it, and the identities of the predators the Church is still protecting, are hidden in “Secret Files” far from public view. The Secret Files contain critical information that needs to be made public and will help deliver justice to those who have suffered from childhood sexual abuse, some for years. While the Church has released lists of priests who have been “credibly accused” of child sex abuse, the victims of those priests and the public deserve to know the whole truth, not simply what the Church has been willing to voluntarily disclose. Because the Secret Files’ contents will eventually be released in the discovery process as lawsuits are filed under the CVA, the reality contained

within them will eventually come out. However, all victims, many of whom are in their sixties and seventies, deserve access to information about their abusers that may be currently in the dioceses' possession. Survivors have fought for the right to seek justice for decades and deserve access to these files as soon as possible.

Fortunately, last year your office, under Attorney General Underwood, issued subpoenas to all eight Catholic dioceses in New York state to disclose how the Church knowingly covered up allegations of abuse among children for decades. At the time, the New York Archdiocese claimed it was "ready and eager" to cooperate with your investigation. But since then, the public has received no information about the status of these files, your office's investigation, or the contents of the Secret Files. You have the opportunity to change that. Hundreds of survivors are seeking accountability, not only from the Church, but from their Attorney General.

On behalf of survivors who were sexually abused as children by trusted priests and members of clergy throughout the State of New York, we beseech you to assist victims of this misconduct by publicly and promptly, without waiting for the opening of the CVA window on August 14, 2019, revealing the information you have obtained from the dioceses of New York and releasing the Secret Files.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Freeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jennifer Freeman