News



Ramsey County District Attorney Jon Choi, left, and Archdiocese officials hold a press conference Tuesday, jan. 28, 2020, after the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis submitted its final progress report on tightened clergy abuse protocols to a Ramsey County District judge at the Ramsey County Attorney's office in St. Paul, Minn. Ramsey County had sued the archdiocese in 2015 for failure to protect children, and dropped the charges in lieu of three years of court monitoring of the archdiocese. (AP/Star Tribune/Anthony Souffle)

by The Associated Press

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Prosecutors announced Tuesday that they have ended four years of oversight of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis as part of settlement designed to protect children from clergy sex abuse.

Ramsey County sued the archdiocese in 2015 for its failure to protect children. County and church leaders said children are now safer, and many improvements have been made, including child protection training and background checks for all employees and clergy, the Star Tribune reported.

But Ramsey County Attorney John Choi said the work to protect children is a race with no finish line, and his office offered 25 recommendations for the archdiocese going forward. They include expanding the involvement of lay people, including women, in positions of influence, and permitting victims of abuse to testify before a review board as a matter of right so their voices may be heard.

Prosecutors filed civil and criminal charges against the archdiocese in 2015, alleging it failed to respond to repeated reports of sexual misconduct by former St. Paul priest Curtis Wehmeyer, who went on to sexually abuse the children of a church employee. Wehmeyer pleaded guilty to charges in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The civil charges were dismissed in December 2015 with the settlement agreement. The criminal charges were dropped in 2016 when the archdiocese admitted wrongdoing and agreed to meet with victims and adopt stronger measures to prevent clergy abuse.

Choi and Archbishop Bernard Hebda said the archdiocese will continue to work toward creating and fostering a culture in which every person is vigilant in ensuring no more children become victims of clergy sexual abuse, KSTP-TV reported.

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