

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Abuse Victims and Supporters Urge 'Careful' Selection of US Ambassador to the Vatican

WASHINGTON, D.C., USA – December 9, 2024 (9 a.m. PST) – As President-elect Donald Trump considers his nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, Ending Clergy Abuse (ECA)—an international coalition of survivors and advocates from over 25 countries working to hold the Catholic Church accountable for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults—calls for a “careful and thoughtful” selection process, one that prioritizes the dignity and rights of survivors. Speculation regarding potential candidates has already begun:

https://www.pillaratholic.com/p/who-will-trump-appoint-as-ambassador?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

“Just as a doctor’s first duty is to do no harm, President-elect Trump must ensure his nominee has a spotless record on issues of sexual violence, particularly child abuse, rape, and institutional cover-ups,” said Gemma Hickey, clergy abuse survivor and ECA Board President. “At a minimum, the nominee must be someone who has never excused or downplayed the Church’s decades-long abuse scandal. Above all, they must work to prevent complacency, ensuring the scandal is never dismissed as ‘behind us,’ and prioritize ongoing vigilance to prevent future abuse.”

Abuse victims often feel a deep sense of helplessness and hopelessness, feelings that have been amplified in recent weeks by Trump’s nominations of individuals accused of abuse to high-profile positions. This pattern of appointments intensifies the suffering of those who have already endured so much: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/19/us/politics/trump-women-metoo.html?searchResultPosition=1>

Unfortunately, many political figures—Catholic or otherwise—have made insensitive, inaccurate, or damaging remarks that continue to harm abuse survivors. Examples include:

- Senator Rick Santorum dismissed the abuse crisis by linking it to liberal cultural trends: https://www.bishop-accountability.org/news2012/01_02/2012_01_06_Cohen_SantorumBlames.htm
- Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani hired a credibly accused priest, Monsignor Alan Placa, despite allegations of sexual abuse and cover-ups: https://www.snapnetwork.org/why_does_an_accused_sex_predator_priest_in_rudy_giuliani_consulting_firm
- Former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, Mary Ann Glendon blamed the abuse crisis on the cultural pressures of the 1960s that led priests to explore their sexuality, further

enabled by a church that had become too lax:

https://www.snapnetwork.org/news/otherstates/USA_churchandfaithful_reel.htm

Given the Ambassador's crucial role in shaping U.S.-Vatican relations, President-elect Trump's choice must reflect a strong commitment to protecting children and vulnerable adults. The nominee should have a proven track record of advocating for survivors and driving meaningful systemic change within the Church.

"We urge President-elect Trump to select a nominee who embodies a strong moral and ethical commitment to justice, accountability, and the protection of vulnerable populations," said Janet Aguti, ECA Board Vice-President. "The next Ambassador must have the courage to confront the full scope of the clergy abuse crisis and ensure that such abuse is never allowed to happen again."

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