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## Report must be released

For decades, the Roman Catholic Church has gone to extremes to ignore, cover up and downplay the widespread sexual abuse and rape of boys and some girls across the world. So it comes as no surprise that nearly two dozen current and former priests are seeking to block the release of a grand jury report detailing serial sexual abuse in Catholic dioceses across Pennsylvania.

Fight, deny, and delay have been the Catholic Church's playbook when it comes to clergy sexual abuse. When all else fails, the church quietly pays confidential settlements to sweep cases under the rug.

But the truth must come out if the church and its vic-

### EDITORIAL

**The Supreme Court should order inaccuracies in the grand jury report fixed. But it must become public.**

tims can ever move past this sordid scandal. That is why the Pennsylvania Supreme Court must allow the release of the more than 800-page grand jury report that shines a light on alleged clergy abuse in all of the state's Catholic dioceses except for Philadelphia and Altoona-Johnstown, which were the subject of earlier investigations.

The report is the culmination of a two-year investigation by Attorney General Josh Shapiro's office, which included grand jury testimony by dozens of sexual abuse victims.

Church officials in the six dioceses that were the focus of the investigation said they would not try to stop the report's release. But attorneys for nearly two dozen current and former clergy went to court to block the report's release, claiming it was full of inaccuracies that tarnish the clergymen's reputations.

It would be good to know who is paying the legal fees for the clergy, who are represented by the high-powered firm of Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP.

In the meantime, the Supreme Court should consid-



**A.G. Josh Shapiro.** Clergy named in the report were allowed to write a response.

WILLIAM THOMAS CAIN / For The Inquirer

er the due process claims by the clergy and order any proven inaccuracies corrected. There is also a simple solution to this dispute.

The Attorney General's Office shared relevant portions of the report with the named clergy and gave them an opportunity to write a response. That response should be included in the report when it is released without redactions. That way all the facts will come out and everyone will have had ample opportunity to respond.

This is an important matter of public interest. For one thing, it involves tax dollars spent on a major investigation. The public has a right to know the findings. More important, the victims have a right to tell their stories and attempt to hold the abusers accountable. Indeed, until the church stops taking half steps and truthfully and forcefully comes clean regarding its clergy abuse scandal, the institution will have a hard time regaining its moral authority.

In a court filing arguing for the report's release, attorneys for abuse victim Todd Frey used Pope Francis' own words, spoken during a 2015 visit to Philadelphia, to support their case. "The crimes and sins of sexual abuse of minors may no longer be kept secret," the pope said.

**Charles L. Becker of Kline & Specter in Philadelphia added: "Like the pope, Mr. Frey asks that the crimes committed against him and against other victims across the commonwealth no longer be shrouded in secrecy." Amen.**