

July 2, 2026

Bishop Mark Beckman
The Chancery, Diocese of Knoxville
805 S. Northshore Drive
Knoxville, TN 37919

Dear Bishop Beckman,

The recent reporting by Tyler Whetstone in the Knoxville News Sentinel (May 27, 2026) highlights serious concerns regarding the Diocese of Knoxville's compliance with Article 3 of the Dallas Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

I have raised these concerns regarding Article 3 with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in correspondence dating back to January 14, 2020. The USCCB refused to address this. (see attached document)

The Diocese of Knoxville has not only violated Article 3 of the Charter but also Trey's Law, which was adopted in 2018. Both of these deliberate actions by the diocese have violated the civil rights of Mr. Michael Boyd.

Your statement of May 27, 2026, while noted, does not constitute the formal, binding, and transparent resolution required to address these systemic failures. The statement says that you will not seek new NDAs or enforce those already in place. Until it is diocesan policy, it has no canonical enforceability. (See attachment)

To demonstrate a commitment to genuine accountability, I request that the Diocese:

- Issue a canonically significant document detailing its policy regarding NDAs, rather than a general statement.
- Ensure this policy not to seek or to enforce NDAs for clergy sex abuse victims is read at all Sunday Masses, published in parish bulletins, and placed prominently on the diocesan website.

The dioceses of Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis have collectively betrayed both the faithful of the church and the public at large through the systemic use of non-disclosure agreements and other silencing instruments. These actions, which have historically silenced survivors, represent clear violations of both the Dallas Charter and possibly Tennessee's "Trey's Law."

We urge the bishops of Tennessee to meet and issue a joint, formal commitment to cease the use of non-disclosure, non-disparagement, and other silencing clauses in settlements with abuse survivors.

The USCCB bears guilt in this matter. They were told of the situation in the Diocese of Knoxville as far back as 2020, two weeks after Knoxville issued a press release concerning Michael Boyd's lawsuit. They ignored it, giving consent by their silence to this practice. We believe the issuing of NDAs since the Dallas Charter of 2002 has been widespread and given a "wink and a nod" from the USCCB.

Furthermore, the USCCB has a flawed audit system conducted by Stonebridge Business Partners that depends on the veracity and transparency of the officials of each US diocese to truthfully report their compliance with the Charter. We will be asking the USCCB for a complete forensic audit from 2002 to the present of Article 3 in the Tennessee dioceses of Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis. Once complete, this will undoubtedly lead to demand for these same procedures across all US dioceses.

The Abuse Survivors Coalition remains committed to ensuring these issues are addressed with full transparency. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Archbishop Gabriele Giordano Caccia, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America

Archbishop Shelton Fabre, Archdiocese of Louisville, KY, Metropolitan of Tennessee and Kentucky

Bishop Mark Spalding, Diocese of Nashville, TN

Bishop David Talley, Diocese of Memphis, TN

Bishop Barry Knestout, USCCB Chairman of the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People, Diocese of Richmond, VA

Archbishop (Emeritus) Joseph E. Kurtz, Archdiocese of Louisville, KY

Bishop John C. Iffert, Diocese of Covington, KY, Area V (5) liaison with the USCCB Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People

Bishop James Vann Johnston, Former Chairman of the USCCB Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, MO

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, President of the USCCB, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, OK

Bishop Daniel E. Flores, Vice-President of the USCCB, Diocese of Brownsville, TX

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, Secretary of the USCCB, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda, Treasurer of the USCCB

Msgr. Michael J. K. Fuller, General Secretary of the USCCB, Priest of the Diocese of Rockford

Thom Englert, Stonebridge Business Partners

Stephanie Wood: Stonebridge Business Partners