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**N.J. Catholic diocese has a plan to compensate victims of abuse. Advocates aren't happy.**

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Advocates for people sexually abused by clergy are opposing a plan from a New Jersey Catholic diocese to compensate victims.

The Diocese of Camden announced a proposal on Dec. 31 to speed up the process of setting aside millions of dollars for abuse claims, after the church filed for bankruptcy in October.

“The Diocese wants to continue to pay survivors rather than lawyers and other professional advisers,” the church said in a statement.

Critics said victims were not adequately consulted and the timeline was too fast.

“To us, the fact that the Diocese was allowed to declare bankruptcy in the first place is absurd, and this incredibly swift process to limit claims and protect finances will only harm survivors,” the nonprofit SNAP, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, said in a statement.

The plan would set up a \$10 million trust to compensate victims at a rate of \$1 million a year for the next ten years.

“This plan has no relationship to their true ability to pay,” Jeff Anderson, an attorney representing many abuse claims, said in a statement.

Church spokesman Michael Walsh said they had sought extensive outside input, but were hurting financially.

“The Diocese and all nonprofit and religious organizations are suffering from the impact of COVID 19 and the tremendous need for more programs to help people in the six counties we serve,” Walsh wrote in an email.

One recent fundraising campaign in Camden has already brought in tens of millions of dollars, according to a diocese report, although only a portion goes to the diocese itself.

Camden Bishop Dennis Sullivan previously said the coronavirus battered the church's finances.

At least 188 priests and religious leaders have been credibly accused of abuse in New Jersey.

State law changed a year ago to allow victims of abuse more time to sue institutions accused of protecting predators. The surge in lawsuits has led to multiple bankruptcies across the region.

The state attorney general's office continues to oversee an investigation into alleged sexual abuse within Catholic churches, although the pandemic has hampered grand jury work statewide.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*