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PRESS RELEASE

UNAP launches campaign calling on Catholics to stop donating to the Church until the Providence Diocese settles with St. Joe's pensioners

Multimedia campaign features affected retired nurses and healthcare workers

Providence, RI - The United Nurses and Allied Professionals, a union representing more than 7,000 nurses and health professionals, today launched a campaign calling on Rhode Island Catholics to stop donating to the Church until the Diocese of Providence fulfills their moral and financial obligation to the retired nurses and healthcare workers from St. Joseph's and Our Lady of Fatima hospitals. The campaign highlights a number of affected pensioners who are at risk of losing their hard-earned pensions, and is aimed at educating practicing Catholics about this issue.

"When Bishop Tobin and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence allegedly failed to properly fund their own nurses and health care workers' pension system for a decade, they did more than financially mismanage an asset – they jeopardized the financial future of the very workers who selflessly served the Church and their patients for decades," said Lynn Blais, R.N., President of the United Nurses and Allied Professionals. "This whole episode has been a massive injustice to the retired nurses and healthcare workers who have been put in financial jeopardy and face losing their retirement. These people did nothing wrong, and they're losing sleep at night because they know that the pension payments they were promised could stop coming at any time. We are going all in using paid media and grassroots efforts to inform practicing Catholics about the lack of concern Bishop Tobin and the Diocese of Providence have for these mostly female, mostly elderly retirees."

A lawsuit filed on behalf of the roughly 2,700 participants in the pension plan for current and retired employees of Our Lady of Fatima Hospital and the former St. Joseph Hospital accused the Catholic Church and other defendants of "fraud and conspiracy." All of the defendants have settled this lawsuit – except the Diocese of Providence, which still refuses to take any accountability.

The Church now remains as the sole defendant not to settle and has been steadfast in their disregard of the workers, despite running a massive capital campaign called Grateful For

God, which earmarks \$8 million to fund the lifestyles of retired priests, claiming that they “can’t abandon them.” You can view the reactions of the St. Joe's retirees to the Grateful for God campaign here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXUzmVfaRxY>

“Much like the priests they can’t abandon, I dedicated my entire life to the Catholic Church – attending Church every Sunday, donating whatever I could, and working at a Catholic Hospital, St. Joseph’s Hospital,” said Marilyn Horan, a retired nurse who worked at St. Joseph’s Hospital. “We worked for below-market rates at the Catholic Hospital, and went many years without a raise, but they always said ‘Don’t forget about the hidden paycheck,’ meaning our pension plan. I knew I’d never be rich, but I thought I could rely on my pension in retirement. Until they stabbed us in the back and left us hanging out to dry. Not in a million years did I think Bishop Tobin and the Catholic Church would betray us like this. I urge all Catholics to call Bishop Tobin out for this unfathomable betrayal of his own healthcare workers who gave so much to the Church and their patients for decades.”

You can view our 60 second TV ad featuring the retirees delivering a message to the Bishop here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtKWTT927NY>

Blais concluded, “We are urging all Catholics in Rhode Island to do their research into this issue, hear from the affected retirees, and consider not donating any more money to the Church until they take accountability for this massive injustice. We won’t stop fighting for these retirees until the Church does the right thing and makes them whole.”

The UNAP plans to run this campaign indefinitely. The paid multimedia campaign will run across all platforms, including TV, radio, mail, web and social media. There will also be grassroots efforts to inform Catholics of this injustice. All of the campaign elements and more retiree interviews can be viewed at www.ProtectOurRetirees.com.

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