



## Statement Regarding Archdiocese of Boston's First Amendment Appeal

**Brighton, MA** - "The Archdiocese of Boston is steadfast in its belief that the civil claims of sexual abuse need to be resolved and we remain committed to achieving a just, equitable, and expeditious global resolution of these claims. We continue to work with the plaintiffs and their attorneys in the mediation process with the hope of achieving this result.

In the meantime, the First Amendment motion presented argues that the Constitution prevents courts from getting into the business of defining how a reasonably prudent bishop can conduct his ministry, discipline, and governance. As recently as August 2002 the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision in *Hiles v. Episcopal Church* held that government courts cannot "probe into a religious organizations discipline of its clergy."

We reiterate that today's motion in no way seeks to diminish the serious nature of what has been experienced by victims in this archdiocese. However, we have a responsibility to protect our unique constitutional inheritance of the separation of church and state. In all of this, our hope is that by working towards a just and fair resolution of civil claims, the victims, their families, and all of the people of the Archdiocese may experience the healing for which we all pray. "

Copyright © 2004-2006 Archdiocese of Boston; all rights reserved