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U.S. Bishops take action recommended at Catholic Partnership Summit to further protect children; More action still needed

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) voted today to accelerate a review of the 2002 *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* ahead of the mandatory review in 2025, [a move called for in 2019 by leaders at Leadership Roundtable's Catholic Partnership Summit](#).

Leadership Roundtable hosts the annual Catholic Partnership Summit to bring together hundreds of Catholic leaders from across the globe to address leadership and management challenges facing the Church and make actionable recommendations.

Leadership Roundtable welcomed the vote Wednesday by the bishops and encouraged them to support additional efforts, including the proposal of Cardinal Seán O'Malley, archbishop of Boston and president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, to extend the *Charter* to also include protection of vulnerable adults, and to include bishops in line with the bishop accountability protocols contained within *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*.

"The actions taken today by the U.S. bishops are an important move toward protecting children and young people that were brought forth years earlier by Catholic leaders," said Michael Brough, executive partner at Leadership Roundtable. "We encourage the bishops to not wait another several years to take further action, but to continue to shift the culture in the Church away from clericalism and toward the accountability, transparency, and co-responsibility necessary to fully address the crises of abuse and leadership failures that harmed so many."

Leadership Roundtable encouraged the bishops to not stop with just an expedited review of the *Charter* but to take further action recommended by Catholic leaders to create the transparency and accountability, including:

- Creating national standards and protocols for the role and responsibility diocesan review boards
- Establishing standard definitions for accused individuals and other major terminology for addressing abuse with transparency
- Addressing retention and record-keeping lapses
- Releasing the names of all credibly accused, including bishops

- Establishing a comprehensive audit process and periodic, independent review of files for allegations or red flags.

“The action taken today is an important and overdue step and we welcome the opportunity to strengthen the content, implementation, and independent auditing of the Church’s efforts to protect children and vulnerable adults,” said Kim Smolik, executive partner at Leadership Roundtable. “Much more remains to be done and this review of the *Charter* provides an opportunity for greater accountability and transparency in this vital area.”

Since its founding in 2015, Leadership Roundtable has been a mission of hope to the Church, equipping leaders with best practices in management, finances, human resources and communications, as well as convening Catholic leaders to address crises head-on and bring forth recommendations that help build a healthy, thriving Church.

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***About Leadership Roundtable:** In partnership with lay, ordained, and religious leaders and organizations across all sectors of the Catholic community in the United States and Rome, Leadership Roundtable seeks to elevate and implement best practices in management and leadership to establish a culture of co-responsible, servant leadership for a healthy, thriving Church in the U.S.*

For more information about Leadership Roundtable, visit www.leadershiproundtable.org